

強くて ニユートン!

とある人気実況プレイヤーの
VRMMO奮闘記

"Tsunyofukite" Queen Game!

2

邑上 いなかみ 主水 しゅみ



アルファポリス

New Game Plus!

~The Struggles of a Popular VRMMO Livestreamer~

- Volume 2 -

Samurai Hunting

AUTHOR:

Murakami Mondo

ARTIST:

Kureta

[Translated by: Burei Dan Works]

– SYNOPSIS –

A popular Sword and Magics VRMMO that countless livestreamers play, 「Dragon's Krone」. Of the many streamers, the No. 1 most viewed player, Edogawa Ran, is so popular that he is even sponsored by a major corporation. But in real life, Ran had zero friends; a lonely highschool boy who had trouble talking to people.

Then, on a day like any other, as Ran was spending his lunch break bitterly alone, someone approached him. The girl who he adored, Ninomiya Suzu, casually walked up and said the words.

「Would you like to play Dragon's Krone together?」

Using a LV 1 character, with his previous knowledge and techniques, he is unmatched in this virtual reality world. The struggles (in order to become a Riajuu) of a certain livestreamer.

CHAPTER 10

AMBUSHED BY A MAGICIAN

Since Dragon's Krone first started their service, there has been a constant cycle with various version updates, and so we end up with today's version.

From adding Dungeons or Areas, to adding new Mobs and raw materials, and new items that could be crafted from said materials. But even among those things, the thing that the players demanded the most, and the thing that was swiftly implemented, was better usability for the Livestreaming and Browsing. Several improvements to Livestreaming has been made since the early days.

Although the basic feature of paying in-game currency, 「Manila^[1]」, to view livestreams and videos was implemented into the system upon release, since then there has been many changes. Services such as 「Stream Viewer Rankings」 and 「Search Functions」, 「The Ability to Subscribe to Channels」, a genre system that placed video content into 「Category Settings」, many things such as these were added onto the streaming service later on.

In the present day, there were countless numbers of genres that you could broadcast under in Dragon's Krone.

Of course the genre that Aran streamed under, "Mob Subjugation", was very popular among streamers and listeners, but another genre with deep-rooted fans was 「Manufacturing」 broadcasts.

Since there was no Class dedicated to crafting and manufacturing in Dragon's Krone, as long as you possessed the crafting designs known as a 「Recipe」 along with the necessary materials then it was possible for anyone to manufacture goods. If you possessed the one essential material for a Recipe, in other words a 「Key Item」, then you could go to one of the many "Book Shops" and acquire the associated Recipe.

Manufacturing livestreams had a high level of practicality to them. Teaching you how to unlock a recipe by showing you the Key Item needed, Introducing the production

process for a Rare Recipe, and also, listing places where you could go to obtain the materials you need. Manufacturing streams covered a wide-variety of subjects.

「Suzu~, Did you find any~?」

「Not yet~」

Multiple fragments of light were shining through the cracks in the tree line, desperately searching for something in the thicket were two Players.

The small elf with dark skin, Megu, and contrasting her was a girl with snow-white skin, Suzu.

This place was an Area that resided slightly to the West of the port city Crescendo, the two were in a clearing in the 「Rabasta Woodlands」 . After Players had progressed beyond Crescendo's surroundings, this Area was the next place they visited. From low level Mobs to higher ranked ones such as Goblin-type 「Forest Goblins」 and cannibalistic plants known as 「Man Eaters」 , the Mobs here were one step above those at Crescendo.

However, the reason Players visited this Area wasn't solely to level up.

An essential item, especially for low level Players. Here in this Area, it was possible to collect ingredients for crafting Healing Medicines.

「Hey, how many of these “Forest Herbs” do we need to make those healing medicines?」

「I think it was 2, but I want to collect as much as possible. I want to make enough for everyone after all」

「Oh yea, you never know when something like yesterday might happen again huh~」

The two of them, Suzu and Megu, had come to the Rabasta Woodlands for this very purpose.

The 「Something Like Yesterday」 that Megu had mentioned, she was referring to a certain “accident” that occurred when their usual Party challenged a Dungeon not far off from Crescendo.

The person on tank duty, the Knight-class Yamabuki, had failed his job of Aggro Control, and the Mobs changed their targets to Megu and Suzu. Suzu was unable to keep up her healing magic and the party was in danger of getting wiped out.

Luckily, due to Edgar’s efforts, they were able to escape danger by a hair’s margin. ‘As a back-up, everyone should keep some healing medicine on reserve in case of an emergency,’ Suzu had such an idea.

「"Better to be safe than Sorry" is what they always say right」

「Yeah~, I guess so, but this place has some pretty strong Mobs so wouldn’t it be better to bring someone along? Like Yamabuki..... Or maybe, someone like Ed~?」

「.....ツ！」

‘In a certain sense, They’re both “Knights” right~’ Megu said with a grin.

「W-We shouldn’t go asking Edgar-kun and the others to help with these chores you know. Chores like these should be done by us rear-guard members, right?」

「Well, I get what you’re saying but..... Hey, what’s that suppose to mean! I am a spending member of the vanguard you know! I’m just in the rear because it’s dangerous for me to be in front!」

「Hmm, I wonder about that」

「Uwaa, How mean! It’s true that I haven’t been doing much lately, but still!」

「a ha ha, I’m kidding, I’m kidding」

Joking with each other, the sound of their laughter spread out and filled the dense forest.

Megu and Suzu have known each other since they enrolled at Kasumigaoka High-School. Their personalities were the complete opposite from one another, but, perhaps they were drawn to each other because each of them had what the other one lacked. Before they knew it, they were doing just about everything together.

Of course, the same could be said even now after Megu had invited Suzu to play Dragon's Krone.

Even though they played together with Andou and Yamabuki a number of times, there were also many times where the two of them would have their so-called 「Girl's Time」 ; strolled around together and having fun conversations.

「Oh hey, are you streaming today too?」

「I am, the audio is turned off though..... Oh, I found another Forest Herb~」

Suzu replied as a smile came over her face.

「I wonder about it every time, but we're just making healing medicine by following the normal course that anyone can do, will someone really watch your stream?」

「I'm not streaming for someone to watch you know. I'm using it to record what places we've been and where the ingredients drop. It's sort of like taking notes.」

「.....What's that. Kinda like a journal of where we've gone?」

「Yeah. Also, if we find a place where Mobs spawn that's not indicated on the Wiki, or if we get some rare ingredients on our way, we'd want to remember where stuff like that happened, right?」

It was not just this time, but every time Suzu went harvesting for ingredients she would start a livestream.

Starting a livestream costed some of the in-game currency Manila, but there are quite a few Players like Suzu who use streams in place of a daily activities log.

There were also a variety of ways to use the videos. It could be used to record the places where ingredients are, but if you recorded a battle against Mobs then you could study your opponents attack patterns, and you could also revise and review your own way of fighting.

「Hmmm, I see. Suzu is smart huh. Maybe I should do it too」

「It might be a perfect fit for Megu since you don't have any sense of direction」

「Yea yea, like that..... Hey, I don't want to be told that by an airheaded like you!」

Along with Megu's snarling rant, Suzu's light laugh echoed out into the forest.

—And, it was in that moment.

A rustle, from behind the two was something pushing its way through the foliage.

「.....ツ!!」

Faster than Suzu could react, Megu had brandished her twin daggers in an instant, and widened her stance.

But, the only thing Megu saw before her was a dimly lit forest.

All there was were trees being swayed by the wind.

There was no one to be found.

「Megu, that sound just now-」

「.....Something is here huh」

Sensing something, Suzu started chanting the defensive magic 【Scutum I】 just in case.

If a Mob had gotten close to them, then it would be a Forest Goblin, or a Man Eater.

It isn't an opponent the two of us can't defeat, but we've collected enough Forest Herbs already, so we should hurry up and return to Crescendo.

Suzu had come to such a conclusion, and was about to call out to Megu. It was then when-

「My apologies. Did I startle you?」

「.....ツ！」

With a rustling sound, emerging from inside the bushes was a lone Player.

Based on looks alone the two of them could tell it was a high level player. Wearing an expensive looking red robe with a hood attached, was a Tall Female—

Flowing out from her hood was long curly black-hair, her exposed chest was quite alluring, a Woman with the class "Wizard". Displayed above her was the name 「Timbre^[2]」 .

「You were in the middle of harvesting huh. Sorry for getting in your way」

「N-No.....We were thinking of heading back soon anyways」

「Fumu, is that so」

Although she didn't seem threatening, for some reason Suzu was overwhelmingly unnerved.

Perhaps because she felt the same way, Megu still stood with her daggers at the ready.

「Uhmm.....Timbre-san, are you also here to harvest?」

「No, I'm not here for that per se..... Your name is..... Suzu?」

Saying those words, the Female Wizard, Timbre, slowly lowered her hood.

It was too dark to see clearly, but the two of them could make out the particular characteristics of Timbre's Avatar.

Her pupils were slender like that of a cat's, and the whites of her eyes were instead dyed the color black. Her white pupil bewitchingly contrasted against the black exterior. Similar to Megu, she possessed dark skin. An Avatar of the Demon Race.

「Is something wrong with my name?」

「.....This might be an awkward question, but, did you guys participate in the Grand Mission the other day?」

「Eh? Grand Mission?」

「The Quest for the Mist Witch Lookout」

「.....We did participate, but what of it?」

Answering on Suzu's behalf, was Megu who still had her guard up.

As if saying, 'If you make any strange movements I'll take you down immediately,' she continued to tightly grip the handles of her daggers.

「In your Party..... Was there a Samurai?」

Timbre continued on with her question.

She didn't understand the meaning behind that question, but, maybe because of the eerie atmosphere here in the Rabasta Woodlands, but a uncomfortable feeling started to well up in Suzu's chest.

「One of our Friends was there with us. However..... I won't say anything other than that」

「What? A Friend?」

「Megu, let's go」

As that strange feeling in her chest turned into anxiety, Suzu grabbed on to Megu's hand.

But—

「Wait」

Timbre's chilling voice stirred the air.

Those dreadful eyes made her seem all the more ominous.

「Can you tell me the name of that player?」

「Why's it that we have to tell **you** that, huh?」

「It's very important that I find out. And..... I don't want to resort to violent with you two」

As Megu refuted back, without having realized it, she saw Timbre grasping a sinister looking staff in her right hand.

「.....ツ!!」

Pulling along Suzu who was struggling to breath, Megu started to move.

In this moment, deep down inside Megu had never felt more grateful that she had chosen the class Thief.

This was because, out of all the classes, the Thief class had Skills that were effective even against experienced Players; The so-called 「Escape Skills」 .

「Like hell I'll ever tell you that-!」

As Megu let out an angry cry, from her feet came a gust, and a dust storm flew into the air.

The Thief Skill that could temporarily obscure your body: 【Dust Smokebomb】 .

Spreading out into the area like a shroud of mist, Megu and Suzu's figures were completely concealed. Timbre had completely lost sight of the two.

「Suzu! We're Running!」

「Okay!」

「.....ゞ !! W-Wait!!」

As Timbre's voice rang out, the air began to waver as if it was alive, and the temperature gradually began to rise.

In an instant, along with a blistering roar, the high level Skill from the Wizard's 【Fire Magic】 Tree, 【Inferno】 , shot out and cleared away Megu's 【Dust Smokebomb】 . Like dragons soaring into the heavens, several pillars of flame rose up into the sky.

The rampaging magic converted the vegetation into Objects, and a few meters around her were turned into scorched earth.—

「.....Tsk」

Scattered in the surroundings, were the ruins of plants and charcoal.

Megu and Suzu were nowhere to be seen.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「And so, that's what happened」

「.....that so-」

During lunch break in classroom filled with the sounds of afternoon laughter, gentle rays of sunlight shone through the windows.

Having adapted to playing as both Edgar and Aran, The drowsy Ran gave an emotionless response to Megu.

The subject that Megu was telling the thoroughly exhausted Ran about was, of course, the events at the Rabasta Woodlands: The 「Ambushed by a Wizard Incident」 .

Yesterday, during their Girls-Only-Outing in Dragon's Krone (Or at least that's what Megu and Suzu call it) the two of them were approached by a bewitching Wizard and then were attacked while they were talking to each other.

「It's not 『that so~』 ! Me and Suzu were in serious trouble you know!」

「.....Timbre-san..... is like, ridiculously pretty isn't she」

「Eh?」

The person to let out those words, was the long-haired Yamabuki who was watching the video from Suzu's broadcast.

「.....You, of all things, **that** is what you have to say?」

「Eh? I mean, isn't she like dangerously pretty. With this level of beauty, she's like, beyond human level」

「Yamabuki-kun.....」

Ignoring Andou's warning, Yamabuki had entered full play-boy mode. Megu and Suzu looked at him with narrowed gazes, quietly dyed the color of contempt.

「Alright, let's leave the Gross Yamabuki alone. And so, that Wizard wasn't after us, but she was after the Samurai that went with us to the Grand Mission」

「Samurai..... You mean Edogawa?」

At Andou's words, everyone's gazes focused on Ran.

However, Ran was again nodding off with his mind half-way to dreamland.

「Edogawa-kun」

「.....huh?」

Suzu's voice shook Ran to his senses.

「Ed, why are you so sleepy like that? Maybe, after we all log out, do you keep playing all by yourself?」

「M-My bad. No, it's not like that.....」

The character I'm playing is a different one though.

Not saying it out-loud, Ran replied in his heart.

「Anyways, we've been talking about why a high level Player like that would be looking for Edgar」

「But you know, maybe she attacked you because Megu-san said something that got on her nerves, right? The video has no audio so it's just a guess though」

「Yeah, I think Andou-kun's guess might be true」

「Be quiet!」

Megu retorted with a snap.

I was a bit catty since she was sketchy, but that's not why she attacked us, is what I think. That Wizard was looking for our Friend who's a Samurai..... Basically she wanted to know Ed's name.

「Edogawa-kun, is she someone you knew? Before you retired that is」

「No, I have no idea who she is. Also, Edgar is a character I made just recently, so there shouldn't be anyone who knows about it besides you and the others, Suzu-san」

More precisely, from the beginning I only made that character to play with Suzu-san and the others.

「Hey~, this Player called Timbre, she might be using a fake name ya know」

The person who cut into their conversation, was Yamabuki who was accessing the Dragon's Krone website using his smartphone.

It seems like Yamabuki was intent on finding the true identity of the bewitching woman, so he looked up the name "Timbre" in the Player database, but no Players by that name were found.

He sure works quickly, huh.

「..... Fake Name? Can you even do that?」

「It's possible to change your Player name whenever you want, as long as you pay the charges. Your Player Data is under your account name and not your player name, so it's possible to have duplicate player names. If you think about it that way then it should be possible to make fake names and aliases whenever you want to」

「Hmm~ so that's how it is」

‘I never knew~’ Megu nodded her head.

Name changes, this happened particularly often for popular livestreamers. If your name and appearance both matched each other, then you would create a commotion whenever you went out anywhere.

Incidentally, when Ran plays on Aran, aside from when he was streaming, he used aliases on a number of occasions when leaving his Home House.

They started off simple like 「Edogawa」, then to names like 「Igusa」 and 「Poe」. Even like the name 「Edgar」 which he is using for his sub-character, Ran has used a multitude of aliases up until this day.

「If you're right about the fake name, then she's like super suspicious. Oh, she might even be friends with those Colluding players」

「That certainly is a possibility」

No matter how you think about it, the reason why their Collusion plan failed was because of Me after all.

They're really barking up the wrong tree though.

「Anyways, it might be good if we refrain from individual activities though」

「Yea, you're right. If she approaches us again, then we should report her to the admins for harassment」

And with Andou's suggestion they decided to put off the "Ambushed by a Wizard Incident" for tomorrow.

However, despite being absentminded due to his lack of sleep, Ran could not stop wondering about that Wizard.

Ran watch and re-watched Suzu's footage a great number of times.

Reflected on the screen of Ran's smartphone was Timbre's sleek, frightening eyes.

The faces of the Players that Aran knew flashed through his mind, but no matter how hard he tried he could not think of any Demon Race Female Wizards.

「What a pain in the ass」

Ran let out a quiet whisper that no one could hear.

However, even though he let those words slip out, swirling around in Ran's mind was the thought: "Looks like I'll have to look into this properly."

Extra TL note: The speakers confusing yet? Or did I do a good enough job that you could tell who's talking. I could add in some of the confusing ones if some of you want but for the most part I think it's readable. I also did that Character Page thing, if that's any help.

Extra TL note #2: The words Manufacturing/Crafting are used interchangeably, I just pick one or the other arbitrarily. They are not separate terms. The same goes for the words Material/Ingredients.

Footnotes

1. TL note: The name of the in-game currency used in Dragon's Krone is "Manila". It's a type of paper, refers to the Abacá plant (used to make Manila hemp), and also the capital city of the Philippines.
2. TL note: I originally translated Timbre's name as "Timber". After thinking about it, I'm pretty sure it should be spelled Timbre. Sounds more ominous than "a piece of wood", no pun intended. Both words are pronounced as "Timber" though.

CHAPTER 11

THE PROMISE WITH SONYA

「A Female Wizard PKer, is it?」

「A Wizard seemed like she was trying to PK some Friends, so I would like you to do a search and see if any similar incidents have occurred」

As Edgar arrived at his Home House, he called out to Sonya after she had greeted him. What he wanted to ask was about that subject.

Wanting to find out the true identity of the aforementioned Wizard, the first thing that came to Edgar's mind was to ask Sonya.

A Support NPC was as the name suggested, they could support the player by processing conversations through a Natural Language Processing interface. Aside from personal information stored on the Dragon's Krone server, they were able to access information from a variety of databases as well as open data on the internet.

In other words, by conversing with a Support NPC, it was possible for you to search for information using a massive database.

「Understood, Edgar-sama. Please wait one moment」

Closing her eyes, as if she was deep in thought, Sonya remained silent for a while.

「..... Among the information maintained by the administrators, I have accessed the database in regards to exchanges between different Players, but I did not see any incidents that match with the desired specifications. However, lately on the internet there has been a steady rise in organic searches in relation to Dragon's Krone and a certain Keyword」

「What Keyword」

「It is 『Samurai Hunting』」

「..... Samurai..... Hunting?」

Hearing Sonya say that Keyword, Edgar began to recall the words that Wizard had said.

According to Suzu-san and Megu-san, that Wizard was saying that she was looking for a Player with the class Samurai. A Wizard PKer who was searching for a Samurai. She must be related to this Keyword somehow.

Or rather, what is Samurai “**Hunting**” suppose to mean.

「Can you tell me the details?」

「I will be conducting an integrated analysis of the correlating databases so please wait one moment」

Sonya once again closed her eyelids.

Since the internet is a fragmented assembly of open data, you have to gather similar parts of information and associate them for analysis, only then can you come to an appropriate answer for what you are searching for.

If you had to do this all by hand then it would take an overwhelmingly long amount of time to complete this necessary step of information integration and analysis, you would probably pass out from exhaustion. But here in the world of Dragon’s Krone, Sonya can utilizes the architecture of “Cloud Computing” to increase her calculating power. It took her merely 1 second to complete the search.

「Samurai Hunting, within the past few days, it is something a portion of high level players have been doing. It is the generic name for when Players go out and PK members of the Samurai Class」

「So it's PKing with Samurais as the target?」

「It is just as you say. Upon confirming it with the Dragon's Krone database, within the past 5 days there has been a large increase in mortality rates for Samurai Players due to PK」

「The reason being?」

「My apologies. I am unable to ascertain the reasoning behind it at this moment」

The information from the Net is probably gathered from victims posting on their SNS after all.

The victims themselves will probably have no way of knowing why they were attacked, huh.

「Hmm~」

High level Players are going after Samurais and PKing them.

Based on what Sonya said, there's a high possibility that the Wizard who attacked Suzu-san and Megu-san is somehow related to this 「Samurai Hunting」 .

But, I just don't see a reason for it.

Incidents where a particular Class is targeted for PKing more frequently than others, this isn't the first time this has happened.

In the past, there was an incident where, due to a series of version updates, the Thief Class was buffed and became unbalanced. The discontent among Players erupted into an episode where Players took matters in their own hands and gradually started to PK Thieves.

Because of that incident the population of Thief Classes steadily decreased, and in a panic the developers hurried to adjust the Thief Class's Stats. The incident ended with the Thief Class receiving a nerf; lowering their stats to a more mild level.

However, this time is different.

“Samurais will be buffed”, there was no information saying that would happen, and a version upgrade was still far off in the future.

In any case, this Samurai Hunting isn’t a movement instigated by the vast majority of Players.

The driving force behind this..... For example, it might be something like personal grudges against Samurais—

「..... Megu-san might be right about all this」

The words that Megu said in the classroom flashed back in Edgar’s mind.

As expected, that Wizard is friends with those 「Colluding Players」 Maybe she was trying to give her 「Thanks」 for what happened during the Grand Mission. As she was searching for me, she might have started to slowly PK Samurai Players, it’s certainly a possibility.

「Edgar-sama, a Message has arrived」

And then, in the corner of his eye floated a new mail mark.

There wasn’t many Players who would sent this character a message, so Edgar could guess who it was from. It was probably one of his classmates trying to contact him.

「.....Today’s hunt is canceled, huh」

The sender of the message was Suzu.

The contents said 「I wish to put today’s gathering on hold」 , something to that effect.

The incident where they were attacked happened just yesterday. Not even a day has passed yet, so it wouldn't be strange if they were hesitant to log in and show their faces.

But, in that case, this was a chance to investigate about this 「Samurai Hunting」 .

「Edgar-sama, Shall I accompany you as well?」

「.....Eh?」

「Since your plans for today have been canceled, you were planning on investigating this 『Samurai Hunting』 incident, were you not? The people who are targeting Samurai are mid-level Players and above. Although you are an experienced player yourself, it is dangerous for you to act alone」

As if she could read his mind, Sonya offered up those words.

Because Support NPCs are modeled after a conversation-based interface, using the behavioral patterns they observed from the Player so far, apparently it was possible for them to predict a Player's actions when they receive new information.

Anticipating a Players thought process, and then Supporting them however they can, in the end a Support NPC's duty is to make sure that the Player can have a fun, stress-free experience in Dragon's Krone.

「Now that you mention it Sonya, I did promise that 『We would go hunting together when everything was taken care of』 , didn't I」

「Is the problem taken care of?」

「.....Well, for the most part」

The problem was resolved in a way I never would've thought, though.

To think, things would end up with Me frequently playing Dragon's Krone together with Suzu-san and the others... that result never crossed my mind.

「Oh, how delightful. Well then, let us depart immediately」

「Ah, hold on a second. We still have to prepare Sonya's equipment」

「My equipment, is it?」

「You weren't planning on heading out empty-handed right? I'll go and fetch something for you from Aran's item box. By the way, what kind of weapon would you like to use?」

Unlike Players, Support NPCs did not have an aspect known as 「Class」 .

In place of that, they had the advantage of being able to equip any weapon or armor without any restrictions, although they had the demerit of not being able to use Skills.

Basically, it was quite difficult for Support NPCs to be the main attack power in battle, and although they could not use healing magic to save Players from danger, they could add supplemental damage when fighting against Mobs, and they could do other things such as use items that you gave them. Ultimately they are assigned 「Support」 duty when it comes to combat as well.

「Upon analyzing Edgar-sama's fighting style up until now, in order to not be a hindrance during combat, I believe that a long distance weapon such as a 『Bow』 or a 『Gun』 would be best suited for this situation」

「Sonya, is that the type of weapon that *you* want to use?」

「.....and by that you mean?」

Not understanding the meaning behind the question, Sonya tilted her head to the side.

「Well, simply put, I wanted to hear your personal opinion about it, but..... I guess I'm asking you a strange question huh」

I ended up saying something stupid, Edgar was feeling a slight sense of guilt inside.

Sonya was not a human.

She's only acting and saying what she believes is optimal after analyzing my actions;
She is just a Program.

She doesn't have any personal desires, and the only feeling inside of her is, at most, the desire to help Players.

However, the next words to came out of Sonya were somewhat surprising.

「However, if Edgar-sama so inquires, then I would like to use a Bow. Using a Gun will be difficult after all..... And in addition, my specialty was using the Bow back in the old days」

「B-Back in the old days? The Bow?」

「Indeed so」

As Sonya nodded her head, Edgar could not hide his surprise.

She used to use bows in the past?

It can't be, does this mean that Sonya had an established 「Past」 from before I started playing Dragon's Krone?

「The Truth is..... Before I was sent to attend to Edgar-sama, I used to be a bow soldier at the Veroon Grand Duchy」

「ゞ!? You're joking right?」

The Veroon Grand Duchy was a massive military country in the center of Dragon's Krone.

For her to be a bow soldier there— Wait, that would mean, Support NPCs were just normal NPCs throughout the world who chose to become Support NPCs?

I've been playing Dragon's Krone for many years, but I've never heard of anything like that, and Sonya has never mentioned it, I haven't seen anything that would indicate that.

But, in order to make this Virtual World be as close to 「Real」 as possible, I wouldn't even be surprised if such a Program really did exist. In other words, each and every one of the Support NPCs have a pre-determined backstory when they are created, and their histories interconnect with other NPCs, and—

「*Fufu, just kidding*」

「.....Eh?」

As Edgar's imagination continued to go out of control, Sonya interrupted him with a slight chuckle.

「I don't have a complex backstory like that. It's simply that my specialty weapon was designated when Edgar-sama first made his character」

「Wha.....!」

「I am terribly sorry, I was so happy that we would be going out together that I ended up joking around a bit」

Sonya stuck out her tongue slightly in a playful manner.

That gesture only made Edgar even more baffled.

I've said it many times, but Sonya analyzes my behavior, and then acts in the most optimal fashion according to a program. She is just a Program living in Dragon's Krone—

But, is Sonya really just a Program?

In the first place, here in this virtual world, are humans and programs really any different?

「.....Perhaps, have I made you angry?」

Edgar was stuck in a loop of questions that had no answer.

Seeing his expression, Sonya spoke up in concern.

「Ah, no, I'm not mad. I'm just a bit surprised」

「Is that so. That puts me at ease」

Showing him her never-changing smile, Edgar found himself feeling somewhat embarrassed.

Lately, I've been having a lot of embarrassing and awkward moments with Sonya.

Perhaps, even though I've never taken Sonya hunting with me before, I've been going out and playing with Suzu-san and the others. Maybe I'm feeling a bit guilty about it on the inside.

—I'm just overthinking things.

「Just wait a bit. I'll go grab a bow from Aran's item box」

「Yes, I have received your command. Please be careful on your way」

Sonya silently lowered her head and gave a bow.

Seeing him off like she always did, Edgar temporarily logged out of the Dragon's Krone world.

CHAPTER 12

SEX MANIAC AND THE USA

「My apologies, could you please repeat yourself once again?」

「Since I couldn't find a fitting bow for Sonya in Aran's item box, I figured that we should go out and make one instead」

「Go out, right now?」

「That's right」

「And also..... to *this* place? I, for one, thought that we were only going to head to the Rabasta Woodlands.....」

Edgar was calm and collected as Sonya was a bit perplexed. Their current location, far away from the starting port city of Crescendo, they were in a town by the name "Myune", standing inside a small book shop.

Myune was located in the center of the Grand Map in the vicinity of the 「Veroon Grand Duchy」 Area. Isolated on the outskirts of the Area, it was a small town surrounded by desert.

The Veroon Grand Duchy Area, to the North there is the 「Demon King Magda's Command Post」 which many high level players flock to. In addition, scattered to the East and West are a number of key places necessary for mid-level player. In this world the Veroon Grand Duchy is the Area with the highest population density, and yet there are hardly any players living in this town of Myune. The reason for this was because the major city Vernewt located nearby. With many NPC vendors, an Auction House, and plenty of Story Events, Players often head to large city of Vernewt instead.

「For a while now I've been wanting to scout out Myune as a possible livestream location」

Although Myune was a town that had little practical use for your average player, it might be a valuable town for people who want to livestream without being interrupted by other players. Edgar had once thought of that idea and has since wanted to visit this town.

「Also, I read about it on the Wiki, but it looks like they're selling the recipe for a nice bow with pretty good cost-performance in this book shop」

「The place where Edgar-sama's good friends were attacked by that Wizard, was it not at the Rabasta Woodlands?」

「We're just stopping by... well I guess this is a pretty big detour. But, even though it will cost some money, we can just Fast Travel back so it isn't a big deal」

Edgar spoke as if it was a trivial matter.

Fast Travel was a convenient function that allowed you to instantly arrive at a town or dungeon you have previously visited. However, aside from traveling to your Home House, the distance you could travel was limited by how much in-game currency Manila you had to spend.

「It is true that returning back will take less time compared to us arriving here, but having come so far, I believe it will cost quite a sum of money.....」

「You shouldn't be worrying about the amount, Sonya. And besides, I brought more than enough money from Aran」

But regardless, the reality is that Edgar and Sonya had used a considerable amount of Manila just to reach Myune.

First off, they left the port city of Crescendo by sea and arrived at the city of Gran Holts, in a region within the Veroon Grand Duchy. From there they used the regularly scheduled stagecoaches to reach the city of Vernewt. Once in Vernewt, they rented some horses and continued down a long barren road until finally arriving at Myune.

Of course, with Sonya being Sonya, she had already noticed that they were heading to a different location for a while now.

「Come on in. Would ya be looking for a Recipe?」

「We're looking for a Bow Recipe」

「The best one we've got would be the 【Long Bow Creation Method III】 but..... Will that be alright wit you? A Samurai like yurself can't equip the bow that's made from that Recipe though」

Although each and every Class has a limitation on what weapons they can equip, among the available weapons for each class was something more or less like a 「Specialty Weapon」.

If you didn't have any particular preference in mind then the usual thing to do was to equip your Class's so-called specialty weapon. The reason for this was simple, it was because you could refine and enhance your specialty weapon's functions.

By equipping a specialty weapon you could draw out that weapon's latent abilities. For instance you can give it abnormal status debuffs such as 「Poison」, and some weapons increase the number of hits per attack.

Although the bowman class, "Archer", has the specialty weapon of a bow, from among those 「Bows」 there are a large variety of different types.

Long Range with high firepower behind each shot, but with the downside of being difficult to fire in rapid-succession and lowering your movement speed: The 「Long Bow」. Conversely to that, there is the Short Range low firepower, but capable of rapid-fire shots: The 「Short Bow」. Furthermore, unlike a normal bow which uses 「Angled Trajectory」, the highly accurate 「Bow Gun」 which can only fire short distances with a linear trajectory, but with an even higher fire-rate than short bows.

Since Sonya is unable to use Skills her firepower is quite limited. Thinking that using a high-powered weapon might offset this a little, Edgar decided to have Sonya use a 「Long Bow」.

「It doesn't matter. The one equipping it will be Her」

「Heeh~, making your Companion equip it..... You're quite the sex maniac huh」

「.....ツ」

Looking at Sonya's figure as she stood close behind Edgar, the shopkeeper wore a mischievous smile.

What do you mean by "Sex Maniac". What's wrong with me setting things to my preference.

While glaring back at the shopkeeper, Edgar spat out those words in his heart.

Incidentally, "Companion" was another name for Support NPCs.

Often times Support NPCs that go hunting alongside their masters are called as such.

「Well~, Having a good look at your Companion here, I can't say I don't get where you're coming from」

「Well, Thanks」

While averting his eyes as to not see the shopkeeper's sneering grin, Edgar received the 【Long Bow Creation Method III】 from him and put it in his item inventory.

We've got the Recipe now. Next is the Ingredients.

The 「Composite Bow」 that can be made from the 【Long Bow Creation Method III】 does not require the use of materials above "Rare" class. It is a bow that could be crafted from "Common" and "Uncommon" class materials sold on the marketplace.

We should be able to gather all the ingredients necessary just by looking around town for a bit.

「Is Edgar-sama a 『Sex Maniac』？」

「.....Pfffft！」

The moment they exited the Book Shop, Sonya abruptly voiced those words. Edgar unintentionally spat out his breath.

「According to the database, a Sex Manic is 『A Person of Peculiar Tastes』 and 『A Person with Strong Sexual Desires』. Synonyms include the words 『Pervert』 『Lecher』 『Degenerate』 『Erotomaniac』 —*Mmmph*」

「Hey, Wait, STOP！」

Edgar hastily closed off Sonya's mouth.

What in the world is she saying all of a sudden. It's a good thing this place doesn't have many people.

「Listen carefully Sonya, be sure to never speak of this again」

「.....?? Understood, I have received your command」

While tilting her head to the side, Sonya acknowledged the words of the now panicking Edgar.

To think that bringing Sonya to hunt with me would carry such a "Risk"...

—As I thought, hunting by yourself is much more stress-free.

"That bombshell must never see the light of day," with his thoughts in turmoil, Edgar went around to the other stores that sold Wood and Steel materials.

However... silently following him from behind, and unbeknownst to the person in question, Sonya was adding a certain entry into her Programmed Learning Database:

「*Edgar-sama is a Sex Maniac*」 .^[1]

◇ – ♦ – ◇

「It is an elegant bow, isn't it」

「It's not very high-grade, but for something that doesn't use Rare ingredients I think it turned out pretty good」

Edgar crafted the aforementioned composite bow and handed it over to Sonya, but a weapon was not the only thing that he gave her.

Because the Gothic Lolita dress that fit Edgar's preferences was not very well suited for combat purposes, Edgar had prepared a complete set of Archer equipment.

Made from leather and dyed the color Moss Green was a 「Ranger Jacket」, covering the arm from the shoulder down to the elbow was a 「Ranger Spaulder」, and attached to only one of her knees was a 「Ranger Poleyn」 that allowed you to shoot from a kneeling position. All the equipment were chosen with an emphasis on mobility.

They were equipment being sold at your average armor shop, but since they had the additional attribute of Accuracy UP they were impressively effective relative to their price.

「Well then, Let's head back」

「Understood」

By traveling through Crescendo, we should be able to reach the Rabasta Woodlands where Suzu-san and Megu-san were attacked.

If our opponents are on the level of Forest Goblins, then Sonya should be able to defeat them on her own.

Thus, Edgar opened the Menu. But, as he was thinking of selecting the Fast Travel option, something happened.

「LIKE · I · SAID! There's noo waay, that's unreasonable!」

「.....What's going on?」

With its lack of Players, Myune was a quiet town. The occasional conversations of friendly NPCs gave the place a comforting and pleasant atmosphere. In such a town, a man's angry shout suddenly rang out.

「C-Can you please do something about that! When I return, I will be sure to return the money!」

「In that case you should just go ask your Friends or something! Asking me for help ain't going to get you anywhere!」

The commotion was coming from the center of Myune. In the middle of the town was a beautiful oasis; glimmers of light danced on water's surface as the sun reflected against it. Close by was a single general store.

At the entrance of the store, was a daunting old man who seemed like the storekeeper, and a Player who looked like she would burst into tears at any second.

It seems like the girl was being driven out by the storekeeper. A small young girl with rabbit ears, a Player with the name 「USA」 .

The half-human, half-beast Avatar she used was part of the Mohm race.

Unlike the Elf-race Megu and the Demon-race Timbre, and different from the Human-race Edgar, the Mohm race was a species similar to a Mascot Character for Dragon's Krone. Even as adults, people of the Mohm race will always have small and tiny bodies.^[2]

「I, I don't have any Friends..... At this rate I won't be able to get back home to Crescendo.....」

「Like I care, you dunce! You have no one to blame but yourself, coming here at your Level without even a back-up plan!」

「Hnnn~.....」

Her rabbit ears drooped, the Mohm Girl hung her head down.

「I wonder what might be the problem」

「It's probably.....」

Hearing the exchange between the shopkeeper and the Mohm Girl, Edgar shifted his attention to them.

That Player has no way to get back to Crescendo.

Incidents like this often happened to beginner players.

As they start to increase their Level, they get absorbed in the Fun of defeating Mobs, and before they realize it they will find themselves in a location farther off than where they intended.

And so, if they are unlucky then they will step foot into a hazardous Area, and no matter how hard they try they can't defeat the Mobs attacking them. They will have no choice but to take refuge in a nearby town.

Being in a town surrounded by terrifying Mobs, if they had the money for it then they could Fast Travel back to their home town, but if they don't have the money then they will have to once again run past the field of Mobs. If they are killed by said Mobs then they will be sent back to their Home House, but all the items they gathered would be hopelessly lost.

And, it looks like that Mohm Girl committed that exact same mistake.

「Well, it's just like that shopkeeper said, you reap what you sow. Let's go, Sonya」

「Edgar-sama, as USA-san seems to be in quite the predicament, how about we, for instance, allowed her to Fast Travel along with us」

「.....Why would we do that?」

When Sonya's words came forth, Edgar was in disbelief at what he just heard.

「Why in the world do I have to go out of my way to help some random Player. Besides, if you die then you'll get sent back to your Home Home. She'd lose all her items and equipment, but it's not like she will be trapped in this town forever, right?」

「However, She is a Samurai just the same as Edgar-sama. If you took a look at her Status, then you will be able to see that she had just started playing not that long ago」

「.....Samurai」

At that one word, Edgar fixed his gaze on the Mohm Girl who was completely at a loss as she stood before the general store.

Edgar opened up the Menu, and confirmed the Status of his target.

It's like Sonya said, she's the same class as me. A Samurai huh.

Her equipment is 「Cloth Armor」 which is unusual for a Samurai, but the weapon on her waist is no doubt a katana.

Because the size is made to suit her height, it is a pretty cute katana though.

「Oh, this is her self-introduction」

Taking a look at the same Mohm Girl's Status, Sonya let out a couple of words.

On the Status screen, At the very bottom.

There you could leave a Comment that acted like a sort of self-introduction.

And, looking at the one sentence written there, Edgar let out a small sigh.

「 “I started playing because I admire the Samurai, Aran-san” — She appears to be a fan of Edgar-sama, isn't she」

「.....Dammit」

Being in apparel magazines and game magazines, with his mass exposure in multi-media, there were quite a few Players who start playing Dragon's Krone out of admiration for Aran.

And so, being the popular livestreamer that he was, Edgar had an extreme weakness for those who admire him with words like “I'm a fan”.

Because he is a Loner in the real world, here in the virtual world he deeply cherishes his Fans and Listeners.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that it was 「Imprinted in his brain」 to care for them.

「Hey」

「.....ツ!?」

Being suddenly called out to, the Mohm Girl seized up and froze.

「..... Do you have no way of getting to Crescendo?」

「Eh? Eh, ummm..... Yes. That is.....」

She's desperately racking her mind for options, so she's that type of person huh.

While still being hesitantly scared, the Mohm Girl ever-so-slowly nodded her head.

「We were planning on heading back to Crescendo using Fast Travel, but..... well, how to put this. If you would like, do you want us to take you along with us?」

「.....ゞ! REALLY!?」

When using Fast Travel, the one who has to pay the Manila for it would be Me, the Party Leader.

Even if she doesn't have the money, if the Mohm Girl forms a Party with me then she should be able to go back to Crescendo with us.

It's not like Sonya and I will be harmed by it in any way. It's not too big of a deal I guess.

「B-But, I don't have any money you know?」

「That doesn't matter. I don't need any money」

「Ah, but, if it's materials from hunting Mobs on the way here, then I have those!」

Saying that, she took out a mountain's worth of 「Saber Cat Fangs」 「Lizardman Scales」 and 「Iwakui Bug Horns」 from her item inventory.

Every one of those were materials dropped by the nearby Mobs.

If you sold them at a store then their price would be dirt cheap. Materials with the lowest rarity 「Common Class」 .

To be completely honest, I don't want it.

「No, there's no need. I know it seems very suspicious..... But I'm simply doing it out of good will」

「Eh, EHHHH!？」

The Mohm Girl's rabbit ears shot up and stood their full-length in surprise.

My, what a cute gesture.

「T-That is..... Really?」

With her body teetering from side to side, the Mohm Girl looked at Edgar for a long time with upturned eyes.

「Yea, no need to worry. Umm, U.S.A?」

「Awa~, Thank you so very much! I didn't know what to do when the general store owner-san said 『Buzz off~ Like hell I'm going to give you healing items!』 . I was really at my wit's end」

So... The general store shopkeeper was yelling because you tried to ask an NPC to loan you out items and tried to pay them back later, huh.

There's no way he would agree to that.

「Obviously. I get where he's coming from」

「You truly are my lifesaver! But..... umm, my name is "usa"」

「Eh?」

「It's usa. The usa from "Usagi"」

「.....Ohh」

I guess there's no one who would name themselves "Yu-Es-Ay (U.S.A.)" huh. Well, it doesn't matter either way.^[3]

Apart from the Edgar who was for some reason filled with exhaustion, Usa continued on while looking delighted.

「Edgar-san's class is Samurai as well isn't it. Were you alright, Edgar-san?」

「Alright? Why do you ask?」

「Because of the 『Samurai Hunting』 , you know」

Although Usa casually said those words without a second thought, Edgar staggered in response.

「What did you say?」

「I, the reason why I came to Myune was because I was chased here due to the 『Samurai Hunting』 you know. Were you not attacked by people on your way here?」

「.....ツ！」

Edgar unintentionally swallowed his breath.

“*Samurai Hunting*”—

To think that I would be able to get information about 「Samurai Hunting」 out here in this remote place.

「I'm sorry, about that incident, can you please explain it to me in detail」

At first I thought Sonya was out of her mind, and I was completely astonished by her suggestion to help, but I'm glad that I listened to her in the end.

Thus, as Edgar whispered those thoughts to himself, Usa looked back at him with a puzzled look on her face.

Extra TL note: Usa's character design is just... so PERFECT. So perfect that I changed my profile pic into it (no more ren ashbell pic for now I guess). So if you see a rabbit girl in comments, it's still me

Footnotes

1. TL note: The word for "Sex Maniac" is actually close to "Nympho". However, Nympho is technically only used to refer to girls and the male equivalent, Satyr, doesn't sound as good so I just went with the generic Sex Maniac. Also, LOL Sonya.
2. TL note: The word "Mohm" is pronounced as "Mou-Mu". Took me a long time to come up with a phonetic equivalent but hopefully it's good, open to suggestions if someone has a better way to spell it.
- 3.

TL note: Usa's Player name is "USA", spelled in English and in all caps. Edgar misread the name as U.S.A. as in the United States of America (hence the Yu-Es-Ay pronunciation). Hopefully the way I inserted the U.S.A. parts tells you how Edgar pronounced it, and also hopefully most of you pronounced it that way in your heads to begin with.

Her name is suppose to be pronounced as the Usa (ウサ) from "Usa-gi" (ウサギ). Usagi means rabbit/bunny.

As a side-note: The title of this chapter is also USA spelled in English (with no periods).

CHAPTER 13

A LIVELY PARTY

Usa worked for an Apparel Brand company, and it was exactly one month ago when She, when 「Hiiragi Yukako」, first started playing Dragon's Krone.

The spark that drove her to play, was when she was in a bookstore reading a certain article in an apparel magazine—

The article was about a popular livestreamer from the VRMMO game 「Dragon's Krone」, a special feature about an in-game Avatar working as a Model for the apparel brand DICE; an article about Aran.

Yukako had always loved these types of subcultures, and once she knew about Aran she suddenly found herself checking his blog and SNS. From the moment she finished reading that article, she had already become a fan of Aran and of Dragon's Krone.

And so, being swallowed up by her enthusiasm, she took the plunge and bought an UnChain device. Of course, her character's class in Dragon's Krone would no doubt be a Samurai. Aside from subculture, Yukako also adored small animals so, without a moment's hesitation, she chose a half-rabbit Mohm race Avatar.

「And so, I thought that *maybe~* using my real name would be a bad idea, so I thought of using the USA from usagi」

「.....I see」

You ended up tell me, a person you just met, your real name so I think your worries were meaningless though.

“But, did you really think that through? I'm not entirely sure about that,” Edgar scratched his head.

「So, has Usa-san been playing Solo until now?」 (Sonya)

「I have been playing with this child, my Companion. We're nowhere near strong enough though」

「.....Oh my! How very cute. Your Companion is an Animal Type isn't it」

A soft and gentle smile surfaced on Sonya's face.

Timidly poking its head out from behind Usa, was a small black cat.

「His name is Momo. Come on now, Momo, say hello to Sonya-san and Edgar-san」

「.....H-Hello」

「Why, Hello there」

While still being scared, the black cat Momo lightly lowered its small head, and Sonya silently bowed in response.

The character customization for Support NPCs include a variety of different settings to choose from.

From human appearances like Sonya, to Cat types like Momo and even Dog types and Bird types. You could even make your Support NPC a "Spirit" type that didn't exist in the real world.

Depending on the type of NPC you choose, they each had their own special characteristics.

Human types can equip weapons and armor the same as Players do, but non-human NPC types cannot equip them. In exchange, non-human types had fundamentally higher base stats, and a few of them have specialized skills depending on their type.

「.....Anyways, please tell me about this "Samurai Hunting" incident」

「Ah, I'm sorry for letting the conversation get off track. The Samurai Hunting incident, while we were hunting for Mobs, Momo and I were attacked when we left the Northern Area of Crescendo」

So that means, it happened when Usa left the Crescendo territory, and ended up in the Area between Crescendo and the Veroon Grand Duchy. In other words, the incident occurred when she entered the “Saradin Basin”.

「.....With that level, you went into the Saradin Basin?」

Usa was level 11.

To enter the Saradin Basin at that level, just how reckless can you be?

The Saradin Basin is as the name implies, an Area surrounded by mountains. Compared to the Crescendo territory, the high level Mobs that spawn here are one step stronger.

The Saradin Basin, beyond those mountains was the Veroon Grand Duchy were all low-level players want to establish their Home Houses in. It was a fearsome area which low-level players gave the name 「The Devil's Pass^[1]」 .

「.....With Momo, when it's just the two of us we can easily beat the Mobs in the Crescendo area, so I thought it *might* work out」

「So, you went after Mobs too strong for you?」

「That's exactly right. At first I thought it would be a long journey, so I bought a bunch of healing items and Stamina potions, but during our very first battle in the Saradin Basin we ended up using almost all of them. We were in a really big pinch」

「.....I keep telling you to stop doing that you know?」

Interrupting Edgar and Usa's conversation, quietly peeking out from behind Usa's shadow, was Momo.

「But, Master keeps going 『It'll be fine~』 and never listens.」

「Uuu..... I'm sawwy. It's all my faault.」

Bending over, Usa's ears flopped down.

Seeing her appearance, somewhere inside Edgar felt an instinct to protect it.

Apparently many players are "done in" by gestures like this from the Mohm race. As expected of a Mascot Character, it's incredibly cute.

「Well, don't worry too much. It's something that happens quite often to new players. And after that?」

「..... After that, I thought it was best to run away to Myune. Since Myune is in the center of the Area it was only a bit to the West, instead of returning to Crescendo I thought we might survive if we pushed forward and made it here. I ran with *all* my might. My Stamina and HP were just barely enough..... It was only thanks to the healing items that we miraculously made it this far. But——」

In that moment, perhaps her fear began to resurface, Usa silently lowered her head. With downcast eyes, she continued.

「The moment when we entered the Veroon Grand Duchy Area, **that** person was there.」

「That person? The Samurai Hunter?」

Usa firmly nodded her head.

「From a glance I could tell that they were a high level player. When that person caught sight of me they suddenly came and attacked me」

「That Player, was it as Wizard?」

「Yes. They were a Demon-race Wizard」

「Do you remember their name?」

「.....Umm I think it was something like “Tingler”, or maybe “Timbaru”, it was a name like that.....」

At Usa's words, Edgar was struck with a thought.

According to Suzu-san the Wizard who attacked them was named Timbre. It's very likely that she changed her name by now, but there's also the possibility that her name might still resemble the old one in some way.

A Wizard with a similar name and is also part of the Demon-race.

We might've hit “Bingo”.

「Usa, thanks. You really helped me out」

「Y-You don't have to thank me. I was also in a desperate situation where I had no idea how to get home after all」

“Thank you very much”, Usa bowed her head.

And, casually opening up his item inventory, Edgar handed something over to Usa.

「*Fue!?* E-EDGAR-SAN!?」

When she saw the amount of money, both of Usa's ears shot up so fast that you'd think they might fly off into the distance.

Held in Usa's hands, was all the money Edgar had on him— In total the amount was more than 10,000 Manila, a hefty sum.

The amount was nearly 10 times the amount needed to Fast Travel from here to Crescendo.

「W-W-W-What is this!?」

「From here on out, Sonya and I will be heading to the place you mentioned. We wouldn't be able to Fast Travel together... but with that money you should be able to return back by yourself」

「I can't! T-This much money, There's no way I can accept it!!」

Trying to return the money in a panic, Usa grabbed hold of Edgar's hand.

Typically in MMOs it is as difficult to earn in-game currency as it is in real life. Furthermore, since there are things like auction houses that facilitate the sale of highly rare items, the value of currency increases even more so. There are many cases where "Inflation" occurs.

And this also applied to Dragon's Krone, money was difficult to get your hands on.

By defeating Mobs you could sell the ingredients, by clearing quests from the Hunter's Guild you could earn rewards, and by manufacturing items you can sell them through different means such as auctions. In addition, as a livestreamer you can collect a viewing fee and make that your main source of income. However, each one of these methods are difficult for beginners which leads to them being eternally poor.

「Don't worry about. It's money that's just going to disappear if I get beaten by the surrounding Mobs anyways. It's fine if you think about it as a reward for giving me information about the Samurai Hunting」

「.....Uuu」

Tightly gripping the money Edgar gave her, Usa was stuck at an impasse.

It's true that with this money, I should be able to get back to Crescendo.

No, not just getting back, this is enough to buy back all the healing medicine and stamina potions I used up with change to spare.

When I first saw Edgar and Sonya here in Myune where you don't often see Players, I was extremely happy. But, I was hesitant to call out to them.

If I, just some random Player, suddenly asked them if I could hitch a ride with them on Fast Travel, there's probably no one who would gladly accept those terms. In the first place, I'm only stuck in this situation because of my own stupid mistakes.

Even so, although I was so stupid, Edgar-san granted my wish after I answered a simple question.

And, on top of it all, he gave me such a large amount of money too—

「..... Master?」

Momo took a peek at Usa's expression.

And, in the next moment, as if Usa had firmly gathered her resolve, she clenched her fists tightly, and shouted out a declaration.

「Edgar-saan!」

「..... ッ! ? W-what is it?」

「This money, Allow me to consider it as payment for hiring me as a bodyguard!」

Usa spoke with feverish enthusiasm.

However, since Edgar and Sonya had absolutely no idea what she was talking about, they found themselves staring back with wide open eyes.

「W-what do you mean by that?」

「In other words..... I will be going with you! And then we will be going back to Crescendo together!」

「M-Master!?」

“That’s too reckless,” Momo instinctively clung onto Usa’s leg.

「Even though we were barely able to escape death by running away here, are you planning on fighting that Wizard again!? That’s pure suicide!」

「But there’s no way I can let Edgar-san and Sonya-san go alone after they gave us a helping hand, right! Besides, if we use this money to prepare and increase our chances, then we just might be able to beat that Wizard!」

「Well, but you know..... It’s just like Momo said, it’s pretty much suicide, right?」

「Uuu.....I, I’m a Samurai you know? I’m begging you, Edgar-san. Please let me help you」

“Let me help”, as Usa drew closer to him, it was a sight that looked like a child asking for a toy.

She boldly stated her feelings, and acted upon them. In such a situation, Edgar was thoroughly perplexed on what to do.

Then—

「How about we allow Usa-san to accompany us, Edgar-sama. It is better to have a larger Party after all, and if I am given healing items then I will be able to fulfill the role of Healer」

「.....ツ！」

「H-Hey wait, Sonya」

At Sonya's few words, Usa's expression lit up as a smile showed on her face. In contrast to that, Edgar looked like he had suddenly received a shocking surprise.

Hypothetically speaking, even if I ended up fighting against that Wizard, with my knowledge and technique, and with Sonya's Support, I'm confident that we will come out victorious.

But, that's an entirely different story if Usa and Momo came along.

Since she is a fan of Aran's, I can't go around carelessly using the Moon Step in front of Usa. And if you factor in that we will have to protect Usa during the fight, then the Wizard might exploit that fact to shift the battle in their favor.

However, thinking about it the other way around, Sonya's opinion does have some valid points as well.

If Sonya takes on the role of a Healer, then both Usa and I will be able to act as the Attackers. Even if Sonya used a powerful Composite Bow, there's no way she will be on the same level as a Samurai's explosive firepower.

Even if I won't be able to use the Moon Step or other techniques freely, we still might be able to overpower the Wizard.

「.....Usa, if we end up fighting that Wizard, my best guess is that our chances of winning are about 50-50. There's also the fact that we might be constantly attacked by Mobs on the way there. And yet, you're saying you still want to come along?」

—Most of that is a lie though, I just want to scare her out of it.

As he glanced over to Usa, Edgar added in that extra thought in his mind.

However, his scare tactics proved fruitless. While still shaking and trembling, Usa kept her fists clenched, and declared back.

「I-It will be fine! This all must be come kind of fate after all!」

Seeing Usa answer with such self-confidence, Edgar let out a small sigh.

Either this person is incredibly impulsive, or she's the type that can't see the things around her.

At least I'm pretty sure that she's grounded with good intentions though.

「.....Okay then. Let's go together, Usa」

「R, Really!?」

「Go and buy as much healing medicine and stamina potions as you can with the money and come back. Also, we'll need 3 rental horses」

「ROGER! Let's go, Momo!」

As if saying “No time to turn back now,” Usa and Momo vigorously dashed away.

Edgar absentmindedly watched that 「One Person」 and 「One Animal」 run off.

「Fufu, it sure has gotten quite lively, hasn't it」

「..... I never wished for that “liveliness” though」

As Sonya was happily giggling away with a smile, Edgar slouched his shoulders.

Why do I always have to go along with all these troublesome things.

Even though I was a carefree Solo Player not that long ago...

Characteristic of Myune, the air was mixed with bits of sand, and carrying the cold temperature of the Oasis, the wind blew before Edgar and Sonya.

And, as if being supported by that wind, with an item inventory filled to the brim with healing items and stamina potions, was Usa and Momo waiting for them. Edgar's destination was the place where Usa was assaulted by the Samurai Hunter, the Saradin Basin on the boarder of the Veroon Grand Duchy. And so, they depart.

Footnotes

1. TL note: “The Devil’s Pass” is originally 「鬼門」 or “Kimon”, which means “Northeast” and in a religious context it refers to “the direction from which all demon’s come from”. In context, “Kimon” is seen as an “evil” direction and is regarded as unlucky.

CHAPTER 14

THE REMNANTS OF SAMURAI HUNTING

(PART 1)

An MMO game with many Players online at the same time, these types of synchronized online games with multiple people playing at once had a variety of special features that differentiated them from typical Offline Games.

From among those features was the concept of “Time” being incorporated into the game itself.

“Morning”, “Noon”, and “Night”. The flow of time would continue to proceed regardless of if you were Online or Offline. There were many RPGs that used this concept. For example, the same town or village would have different Events depending if you went there in the morning or at night, and in the Field you would encounter different kinds of enemies based on the time of day.

If you happened to finish the daytime event, and wanted to play the nighttime event, then in an Offline Game there was often a function that allowed you to instantly change the in-game time from day to night. However, such a feat wasn’t possible for an MMO game where many Players were online at the same.

If it takes 30 minutes of real world time for 1 day to pass in the game world, then no matter how much you struggled you would have no choice but to wait 30 minutes for the next day to come.

「.....Maybe it would've been better if we waited until it was morning huuu」

While watching the silver moon illuminate the heavens, Usa let out those words as she swayed on her horse’s back.

Several hours of in-game time had passed since they left Myune.

Leading at the vanguard was Edgar. Having previously traversed the Veroon Grand Duchy Area a countless number of times, he used his knowledge to avoid groups of Mobs by traveling down routes with relatively few of them. Trekking down the western bank of the mountain ridge, they were enroute to the Saradin Basin.

「It will be entirely alright. By the time we reach the border of the Saradin Basin where Usa-san was attacked, I believe the sun will most likely have risen by then. Conversely to that, if we were to leave Myune during the daytime, it would be nighttime when we arrive, so it is convenient that we were able to depart as quickly as we did」

「Is that so」

「There's quite a bit of distance to reach the Saradin Basin after all. I also think it was a good decision to leave when we did ya know」

Paralleling Sonya's words, Momo answered in a whisper-like voice as he rode on Usa's shoulder.

Unlike when Edgar was headed to Myune in the first place, they took their time and slowly rode on horseback, leisurely making their way towards the Saradin Basin.

When they were headed to Myune, they were in a hurry because they used the horse's leg strength to outrun the Mobs until they were safe inside the town.

However, this time was different.

The place where the aforementioned Wizard had attacked Usa, it was in a Field surrounded by Mobs.

If they attracted Mobs on the way there, then they would have to fight them on the spot, otherwise it will become an all out war when they reach the border of the Saradin Basin area. In the worse case scenario, the Wizard might be waiting around the area's border, in which case the might be struck in a pincer attack between the Wizard and the Mobs.

Therefore, although they were traveling down a relatively safe route, Edgar proceeded carefully on horseback to not alert any Mobs.

「By the way Edgar-san, how come you're so knowledgeable about the Veroon Grand Duchy area? Even though you're level isn't much different from mine」

「Well actually, It's because I retired from this game once before. For various reasons I've started playing again」

「Eh? Edgar-san, you are a restarting player!? No wonder why, I had a feeling that you were way too calm in this sort of situation」

“I somehow understand now”, Usa looked back with a smile

However, on Edgar's side of things he had an expression like He was the one who couldn't understand.

Me? Calm?

I think you're mistaking my desire to not communicate with other people as that “calmness”

「Before you retired, what Class did you playing as?」

「The same as now, a Samurai」

「Is that true!? Edgar-san perhaps... Did you pick it because you're also a fan of Aran's!?」

「..... Just because I chose Samurai, how did it end up like that?」

As Usa continued happily chatting, Edgar felt a strange sense of unease on his back.

I've been told these type of things over and over again, but as expected I just can't get used to it. I have no idea how I should respond.

In the past, during a livestream he went around and asked Players if they were his fans, those Players would end up posted on their SNS comments along the lines of 「Aran is an unsociable and conceited guy」. He couldn't interact with them besides in

a blunt and awkward manner. Since he was sponsored by DICE, Aran thought that he should at least strive to be more sociable while he was in Dragon's Krone..... But no matter how many times he tried, he was only left with embarrassing experiences.

「Haa~ His technique is amazing, but the best part about Aran is how cool and stylish he is, isn't that right.....」

「Ara. I believe that Edgar-sama is just about as cool as Aran is though, Usa-san」

「.....Pff」

Then suddenly out of the blue, of all things, Sonya made a completely outrageous statement.

Edgar reflexively turned and gave her a menacing stare, but Sonya nonchalantly brushed it off as she responded back a small wink.

「Going out of his way to help out an unknown person, Edgar-sama is a kind gentleman」

「Well, it's true that he's the type person who would hand a random person like me a bunch of money without a second thought huh. I think that Edgar-san is a pretty nice person as well but..... Wait, even though you're about the same level as me, how come you had such a large amount of money like that?」

With Sonya's ridiculous statements setting him on edge, and having Usa suddenly asked a question that was difficult to answer, Edgar wore an expression of anguish on his face.

It would be great if we could just hurry up and find out the Wizard's true identity so I can just go back to Crescendo.

「.....We should hurry」

Edgar change his horse's gait from a walk to a canter; he increased it's speed.

With a dash, Edgar's appearance grew ever so smaller, he went ahead and blended into the darkness of the night.

「Edgar-sama」

「Aaah! Hold on a-! Please wait for meee!」

Feeling that they might be left behind, the two of them pull back on the reins in a panic. They hastened to catch up to Edgar.

From beyond the darkness, you could faintly tell that the scenery was changing. Before they had realized the once desert landscape change to that of a mountain ridge.

Little by little, a whitish glow started to brighten up the eastern sky.

◊ – ♦ – ◊

By the time Edgar and his group reached that place, the morning sun had started to peek out from above the mountains.

The dryness of the place sucked the moisture out of the air, and the overall temperature was lower than it was in Myune.

Contrary to an ordinary Field, it was better to think of the mountain district as more like a Dungeon. The places you could reach on foot were few, so there was pretty much only one set path.

Essentially, if you were to encounter Mobs then it wouldn't be possible to avoid battle and run past them.

「Just in case I'll ask you again. Usa, you're sure that the place you were attacked was just barely within the border of the area, right?」

「Yup. No mistaking it」

「There's no mistaking」

With his eyes on the MAP that displayed the surrounding area, Edgar asked for confirmation as Usa and Momo answered back.

Since Dragon's Krone required the exchange of massive amounts of data, larger than any MMO game before it, instead of being Open World without any demarcations for Areas, it went with the traditional method of clearly marking off each Area's boundary.

According to Usa, the place where they were attacked was around where the Area changes between the Veroon Grand Duchy and the Saradin Basin.

In other words, once we move into the Saradin Basin Area, the instant our Avatars recognize that change, we will be in danger of being attacked.

「That would mean, there's a high possibility that the Samurai Hunter is waiting around the Area Change to ambush Samurai who pass by」

「The Players who enter this Saradin Basin are all beginners going through something like a rite of passage after all. You don't often see high level players going through here either. If you wanted to PK people then I think this would be the best spot」

「Alright. Let's get off the horses and proceed with caution. That Wizard might still be around here after all」

If that Wizard really is there, then it would be fine if they attacked us, but the most troublesome thing would be if they ran away.

If they waited in the Saradin Basin Area Change, while hiding in the shadows, then they could just Fast Travel away before we can even find them. Afterwards I doubt they would ever come back to this place.

But, our members only includes 2 low-level Samurai, a Companion and an Animal.

.....Well, I doubt they would choose to run from that.

「Woow~, it's soo pretty」

「It's a pretty nice view, huh」

Accidentally letting out words of admiration were Usa and Momo.

Edgar's group was slowly making their way by foot while in the shadow beneath the vast Veroon Grand Duchy Area.

Beyond the morning mist, the morning sun glistened and sparkled as it shone upon the largest city in the Veroon Grand Duchy Area; The City of Vernewt could be seen in the distance. Surrounded by rampart walls was an enormous black castle, and the contrasting misty earth made the sight look like exactly like a phantasmal illusion

It couldn't be described with words alone, the surreal sight was incredibly beautiful.

— How wonderful would it be if Suzu-san and I came here with just the two of us...

「Edgar-sama」

Then, from behind them came the voice of Sonya.

「Over there is...」

Sonya pointed out her finger.

The thing over there was..... No, 「The Things scattering there」, the first one to react to them was Usa.

「.....ゞ! Those are..... Items dropped by Players?」

As they proceeded down the road to the Area Change, carelessly scattered on the ground, were Player Items that had converted into Objects.

Items that were converted into Objects... that would mean that this was a place where a Player had died.

However, up until now they had not seen any Items that had turned into Objects. Perhaps, if they were defeated by the Mobs that spawn in this mountain district, then it wouldn't be strange to find a number of dropped Objects along the way.

But the place where this item was dropped, it was just barely within the Area Change— It was just like where Usa said she was attacked.

In other words, there is something other than the Mobs waiting to ambush and hunt down this many Players.

「Sonya, be ready to provide Support. Usa and Momo, watch our surroundings」

「U-Understood!」

Silently, Edgar drew his Katana, and carefully made his way to the scattered items.

From the looks of it, there isn't anything there but the scattered items. No signs of Players or Mobs. That Wizard that attacked Usa, did they already leave... or are they still out hunting—

「This is, it's Samurai equipment」

Edgar placed one of the scattered items into his item inventory.

One of the Samurai's specialty weapons, a two-handed katana, the 「Nodachi」 . Nodachi were among the initial katana you could craft. If they had this equipped, then the original owner must've just about graduated from being a beginner.

But, why were the items just left here.

I could understand if they left behind the beginner equipment that won't go for much, but they even left behind the money and healing items.

The Samurai Hunters, their objective isn't money or items.

If that is true, then the reason behind the Samurai Hunting— *What exactly is it?*

「Edgar-saaan!!」

Suddenly, the sound of Usa's scream rang out and flew towards Edgar's ears.

As Edgar quickly turned his head, reflected in his sights was Usa holding her katana in a fighting stance.

「Edgar-sama, an enemy」

Sonya called out as she readied her bow and pointed it at a boulder.

And, facing Usa, on the opposite side of the Saradin Basin^[1], was the Wizard— No... it was a Mob you often see in mountain areas, the 「Plateau Lizardman」 .

A Mob resembling a humanoid lizard, Plateau Lizardmen were said to be the mountain version of their waterbound Lizardman brethren. They possessed powerful poison, and were a difficult Mob to defeat with just physical attacks.

「Usa, stand back. I'll take it down.」

As long as we still need to search this area, we can't have anyone getting hit by the Plateau Lizardman's poison attack.

If even one of our party members gets poisoned then we will have to retreat back to town.

To defeat it, it will have to be "No Damage".

Fighting with the least amount of members in the shortest amount of time is Best.

Edgar kicked off the ground.

With the 「Nodachi」 from earlier in his hands, he changed into the 【Lower Stance】. Edgar's body jetted forth as if clinging to the earth.

By the time the Plateau Lizardman let out a roar, Edgar's katana had already clashed against its hard scales.

Footnotes

1. TL note: The raws say "Rabasta Basin" here but since that makes no sense at all (the Rabasta Woodlands being where Suzu+Megu were attacked) I assume it was a typo and changed it to Saradin Basin.

Extra.

TL note: a Nodachi (or Odachi) is a really large nihonto that is generally regarded as a ceremonial sword due to its lack of use. As a reminder, Edgar's other sword is an Uchigatana.

CHAPTER 15

THE REMNANTS OF SAMURAI HUNTING

(PART 2)

He closed the distance with 【Ground Rush】. Carrying on that momentum, the 「Nodachi」 unleashed a swift slash that dug into the Plateau Lizardman's side.

Edgar used both hands to deliver that attack.

Yet, unlike the norm, only a pitiful effect shot out from the Plateau Lizardman's body.

「.....Tsk」

There was no response.

The damage it received was only in the 2 digits.

With my current level, there's no way to deal heavy damage with just ordinary attack, huh.

Because of Edgar's attack just now generated Aggro, the Plateau Lizardman's Target shifted from Usa to Edgar.

Gururu, as a sound rumbled in it's throat, the Plateau Lizardman looked towards Edgar with eyes devoid of intellect.

Suddenly—

In an instant you could see the Plateau Lizardman's throat puff up and swell, and it shot out a deadly toxin; it vomited out its 【Poison Saliva】.

A devastating attack that, if it connected, would put you into 「Poisoned Status」 where you receive continuous damage.

However, the attack flew in a straight line.

Kicking off the ground with his left foot, Edgar shifted his center to the side.

As the putrid smell brushed against Edgar's nostrils, the 【Poison Saliva】 missed its target, and turned the place where Edgar once stood into a repulsive violet flower.

、

「Edgar-saaan! Minor physical attack don't have *any~* effect on Plateau Lizardmen-！」

「I know that」

As Usa shouted out, Edgar let out a few words to himself in response.

A Lizardman's special trait, was its extremely tough scales that protected its body like scale armor. With just low-level physical attacks, it was impossible to wound it in any way.

In order to defeat a high level Lizardman, it would be the correct choice to use magic attacks.

But, I know it.

This guy's weakness.

Edgar once again plunged forth using 【Ground Rush】.

What Edgar was met with was not a blade, but it was the *other* weapon that the Plateau Lizardman possessed, he was met by the 「Talons」 on both the Lizardman's hands.

Simply put, he was assaulted by claws.

As if trying to mow him down, the Plateau Lizardman violently swung its talons from right to left.

「Naive」

However, Edgar warped his body, he dodged the talons by a hair's breadth.

The claws sliced through the air, it grazed off the tip of Edgar's nose.

Having swung its right arm, the Plateau Lizardman was carried by the momentum and its posture shifted; The Lizardman's center of gravity was sent into disarray.

That's what I was waiting for.

Visible in Edgar's sights, was the Plateau Lizardman's pearl-like pupils—

Bang, kicking his back-foot off the ground, and placed his body weight onto the tip of his sword.

The sharp blade tip of the Nodachi, as if wedging itself between the joints of scale armor, pierced through the Plateau Lizardman's eyes.

「Gyauuu!!」

As a flashy effect spewed forth, the Plateau Lizardman let out a dreadful shriek.

It had taken damage incomparable to the attack from before.

And, it was given the abnormal status of 「Blindness」 —

A status effect that greatly reduces your accuracy for a fixed period of time.

「N-NO WAY!? P-Physical attacks can work on Lizardmen!?」

Usa raised her voice in astonishment.

Usa, herself, was a much lower level when compared to Plateau Lizardmen; even a normal Lizardman would prove challenging for her to defeat.

If you are low level and encounter a Lizardman, you will need a Thief or Archer who can attack from long range, or a magic-class such as Wizard or Summoner in your Party. If your Party doesn't have those classes then it is best that you give up and run away; that sort of thing was written on the Wiki.

「It's not just for Lizardmen. There's always a method to fight against Mobs, one way or another」

Edgar shifted from the 【Middle Stance】 to the 【Upper Stance】 .

【Diagonal-Slice】 , a skill with a high Critical Hit rate, he swiftly let loose a slash at the squirming Plateau Lizardman's neck.

The neck area was covered by the same scales that coated its body.

But, the moment Edgar's 【Diagonal-Slice】 made contact, a special effect that resembled blood dancing in the air, indicating that Lizardman had taken damage.

With the Critical Hit amplifying the damage, the Plateau Lizardman's HP had melted away.

「EEEEEEHH, WHY!? Why did it take damage!?」

「If you want to take on a Lizardman and only have low-powered attacks at your disposal, then it's necessary to aim for its joints」

As Edgar sealed the large Nodachi back into its saya, the Plateau Lizardman violently shook. Turning into orbs of light, it disappeared.

「T-The joints?」

「Their scales are pretty much the same as armor. Because of that, their weakness are the joints on their limbs. To get it to stop moving you have to go for their eyes first, and then you have to aim your attacks and hit in-between the gaps of their scale.」

「T-Th-There's no way that's possible!」

So fast that you'd think her neck might come off, Usa vigorously shook her head side to side.

A Samurai's specialty was their offensive power.

Unlike the Knight-class and Fighter-class with high defensive power, or the Monk-class that has the highest HP by far, not only do Samurai have low defenses, but they also do not have much HP. Samurai were a highly offensive vanguard class that focused on one-shot attacks.

In other words, if a Samurai were to receive an attack, and if they are unable to dodge it, then they would immediately find themselves in a critical situation.

Just like with the Plateau Lizardman they just faced, if you were to get hit by its Talon attack then it is very likely that all of your HP would be drained in just one hit. That serves to show how fragile the Samurai class was and how they needed protection.

While overcoming that fear and pressure, like passing through the eye of a needle, aiming for the Lizardman's tiny pupils, and then hitting in between the gaps in its joints was completely impossible—

Since Usa was a Samurai the same as Edgar, she knew painfully well the high degree of difficulty of the technique that Edgar had just effortlessly pulled off.

「It's true that it will require some practice, but this is a necessary technique. Especially when you go hunting Solo.」

「I see. Since Master is always playing Solo, wouldn't it be best if you learned it? That technique.」

「.....Uuu, you're right」

“But that's tooo impossiblee-“, In response to Momo's comment, Usa's ears depressingly hung over.

What. So this person is a loner just like me huh.

I kinda understand how she feels.

「Alright then. Usa, be on the look out for any Mobs that might come near. Sonya will come with me and search for anything that might be related to the Samurai Hunting」

「R, Roger-suu」

While still disheartened, Usa answered back.

It's just a feeling, but there's the possibility that more Lizardmen might show up soon.

Before they start showing up in groups, we have to hurry and search for some sort of evidence.

「..... Sonya?」

Just then, Edgar noticed that Sonya didn't say anything in reply.

Without fail, Sonya would always answer back with a prompt reply.

However, after having a look around, even though she was there just a second ago, Sonya was nowhere to be seen.

「Usa」

「..... Hm?」

Sensing something strangely amiss, Edgar called out to Usa.

It can't be, did she get attacked by some other Mob?

I screwed up. I should've been paying more attention to where Sonya was.

「Sonya has disappeared. Be careful of our surroundings」

Once again drawing his katana, Edgar advanced over to the boulder where Sonya was last seen.

And, that was when-

「..... Edgar-samaa!」

「Sonya!」

A blindspot that he couldn't see while fighting the Lizardman, Sonya was in the shadow of the boulder.

But, she's acting strange.

She's grabbing at her neck and looks like she's in pain, she's struggling like she's trying to escape from something.

「Is something wrong! I'm coming now!」

「.....Hold up, stop right there」

「爻!？」

Suddenly, from behind Sonya came the voice of an unknown man.

The thing that attacked Sonya was not a Mob, it was a Player huh.

Edgar immediately filled his presence with an intimidating aura.

「The way you act, it really doesn't fit yur level, ain't that right」

「..... You are.....」

Appearing from behind Sonya was a single man.

From the looks of his indigo hooded robe he seems to be some type of magic-class. Peeking out from within the hood where a pair of sharp cat-like pupils, he must be part Demon-race.

「AH! HIM, It's Him, Edgar-san! He's the one who attacked me!」

Usa frantically pointed her finger at the man standing behind Sonya.

His name was, Timberu.

It's true that his name is similar to 「Timbre」 but..... it's not him. He's not the Wizard who attacked Suzu-san and Megu-san. You could change your name if you paid money, but that was the only thing. It was impossible to change your gender.

Also, this man is—

「.....You, you're a Summoner, huh」

The man's class wasn't Wizard, but a different class called Summoner.

Their outward appearance may look similar, but it was a completely separate class from Wizard.

「Wut of it?」

「It's nothing. You're not the guy I've been searching for so I was just a bit disappointed is all」

「Dat so. As for me, you piqued my interest though」

「.....Uuh」

In the instant Timberu flashed a sly grin, an expression of pain came across Sonya's face.

Edgar finally understood what was happening to Sonya's body.

Sonya was, her thin neck was being grasped from behind.

And, it was by the Mob Edgar has just defeated, a Plateau Lizardman——

「Let that person go. Your business is with *me*, right」

That is, one of the Summoner's skill trees 【Undead Magic】. He's using that tree to make a 【Servant of the Dead】 huh. It's a skill that lets you summon a follower from a Mob or Player you defeated.

I see now. Looks like he used 【Servants of the Dead】 to hunt down Players and Mobs without any risk at all.

「This girl, she's your companion ha? Nice tastes you got there. I should kill her and make her one of my servants, that would be great」

「..... Hey, this is my last warning. Let-Her-Go」

The atmosphere around Edgar changed.

As if a fire had been lit, emanating from the depths of his body was, **Rage**.

「Ah, how scarry~. I knew it, you're different from all the samurai I've murdered so far. You ain't scared at all by my 【Servant of the Dead】 I can tell you've got confidence in your skills」

「In that case, want to find out?」

「..... Go ahead. I'll be making this woman **mine**」

At those words, the Plateau Lizardman began to move.

Raising Sonya up into the air, it grasped tighter around her neck.

Her armor might increase her defenses, but it was useless against the strength of the Plateau Lizardman.

「Sonya-san!」

Usa's cry rang out, that was when.

The air began... to tremble.

For a brief instant, Usa's ears and eyes were assaulted by an intense blinding light and the sound of clashing steel.

Blown by the wind, a cloud of sand flew into the sky.

「..... ツ!/?」

Edgar had suddenly disappeared.

There was not a single person who could grasp those movements.

「I did warn you」

By the time Timberu had realized, Edgar had already finished his deed.

Cloaked in pale-blue light, Edgar struck down the Plateau Lizardman holding Sonya with a stroke of his blade.

Using the Moon Step, he finished it off with a single attack from behind.

「Edgar-sama..... Thank you for saving me」

「Are you alright, Sonya」

While sending a dagger-like gaze at Timberu, Edgar caught Sonya with one hand as she fell down.

It will be annoying trying to explain using the Moon Step in front of Usa, but that can't be helped.

I better think of an excuse for later.

「Bastard..... You are.....」

Seeing Edgar use the Moon Step right in front of him, Timberu let out hoarse words.

A powerful technique that every Dragon's Krone Player should know about, The Moon Step—

However, even knowing that, the expression on Timberu's face was not one of trembling fear... it was of mad ecstasy.

「Hahaha, You, IT WAS YOU! I'VE FINALLY FOUND YOU!」

「..... What the?」

Found me? The hell does that mean?

Does this man know me? From where?

「Well nevermind. I'll have you tell me everything anyways」

There's no use thinking about it. The one who has all the answers is the guy right in front of me after all.

This man isn't the Wizard I'm looking for, but he's killing samurai so there's no doubt he is related to the 「Samurai Hunting」 .

If I can understand their motives, then I might get closer to finding out the true identity of that Wizard.

In that case, let's give him a thorough beating.

I've got to include payback for Sonya after all.

「Edgar-sama, please be careful. That man... he has experience」

「I know that」

Separating from Sonya, Edgar gripped his sword with both hands.

This isn't like the PvP during the Grand Mission, it's PvP between two skilled players.

Now then, Let's have some fun, shall we—

Somewhere deep inside, Edgar had such a thought.

CHAPTER 16

NECROMANCER

Even among all the classes, Summoner was a class comparatively easy to use for Solo Players. So much so that the 【Undead Magic】 Skill Build for the class was specifically called the 「Specialized for Solo Play」 Summoner build.

Aside from 【Undead Magic】 , there were other skill trees of 【Fire Spirit Magic】 【Water Spirit Magic】 【Lightning Spirit Magic】 and 【Earth Spirit Magic】 . Each one of these builds consume Stamina to summon spirit servants, but they had the demerit that the spirits would disappear after a set amount of time.

If Summoners wished to re-summon their servant then it was possible to do so by chanting the magic aria, but if they were in the middle of battle then the defenseless summoner would be subject to concentrated attacks from Mobs, and would promptly find themselves transferred to their Home House.

In order to avoid this risk, a summoner must manage both the remaining time-limit as well as the flow of battle. Even more so for Solo Players, if you did not have a Tank in your party to receive attacks from Mobs then it was very difficult to utilize your abilities to their full potential.

However, if you chose to go down the 【Undead Magic】 build, then that playstyle would greatly change.

For 【Undead Magic】 there was the condition that servants were summoned from 「Mobs or Players that you personally defeated」 , but until the servant's HP reaches zero, or until the summoner used the 【Return】 skill, a servant that was called will not disappear.

In other words, a summoner with an 【Undead Magic】 build did not need to associate himself with a party. The Tank duty and the Healer duty, those responsibilities could be allocated to the summoned servants instead.

A Servant which lasts almost permanently—

And, there was one more reason why 【Undead Magic】 was said to be specialized for Solo Play.

「You ain't gonna say this is unfair, right?」

「Of course not. I know that this is how a Summoner fights, so there's no problem」

Edgar's expression looked like it changed slightly when he responded, the situation had greatly shifted from just few moments ago.

After finished his chant, appearing beside Timberu, was a repulsive number of Plateau Lizardmen.

Their numbers— 10 bodies.

This was the reason why the 【Undead Magic】 build suited Solo Play.

「Hold on a second! Wouldn't this normally be called unfair!?」

Interjecting from the side was Usa.

Edgar unintentionally made a frown.

Even though you said he was the guy who attacked you... why are you even saying that at this point?

「A Summoner using 【Undead Magic】 can only call up to 10 bodies at once. I'm not trying to take his side, but what he's doing is not unfair」

「T-Ten bodies.....」

Naturally, the 【Undead Magic】 Summoner Build that could create armies of skeletons and zombies from only corpses, at the thought of the so-called 「Necromancer」, Usa swallowed her breath.

「T-That's just fine! This is perfect! After all, I came along to help Edgar-san, you know! Why don't you bring it on!」

Shouting with vigor, Usa unsheathed the tiny katana on her waist.

Edgar was just about to say 「You'll get in the way, so just stand back」, but he held those words of advice in the back of his throat.

In order to fight against an 【Undead Magic User】 , it was necessary to swiftly pressure the Summoner's real body. Since he has been constantly hunting samurai at this place, it wouldn't be wrong to think that Timberu has a countless number of corpses to utilize his 【Servant of the Dead】 Skill.

The longer it takes to defeat him, the more the battle will shift in his favor.

In order to bring him into a one-on-one PvP situation, having Usa lend a hand is not a bad idea.

「Fine. I will be the Attacker. You and Sonya should take care of the Lizardman who come this way」

「U-Understood!」

「Listen up, Usa. A large number of Lizardmen will come to attack you. Don't stop your feet. "Hit-and-Away", be aware of your surroundings and aim for their weakness that I told you about earlier. Do you have a wide-range attack skill?」

If she has a wide-range skill, it might make it several times easier for her to fight.

For a Samurai, the earliest wide-range skill^[1] that could be learned would be the 【Crescent Moon Slash】 from the 【Middle Stance】 Tree.

We'd be pretty lucky if Usa actually learned it already though.

However, Usa's response was different from what Edgar had expected.

「Ummm..... W-What is that? If the Lizardmen stop moving, then, 'hit and away'^[2] ??」

Usa pattered about in a panic.

Edgar's thoughts were quickly thrown in disarray.

「Whatever then. What I mean to say is..... Just get the job done」

Well, it's not something you can do just by hearing it, and the opponents are 【Servants of the Dead】. It might be best to not say anything and let her do things how she wants to.

Even if she can't understand the details, anything is fine as long as Sonya is protecting her.

「Yo, finished chatting yet?」

And, sounding like he was growing impatient, Timberu voiced a question.

For him to wait for us to be properly prepared, he must be pretty confident in his skills, that or he's just stupid.

「..... I thought for sure you would attack us as we talked though」

「That would'a been a good idea, but my motto is to do things "fair and square"」

「I see. That's quite the phrase coming from someone who takes pleasure in hunting down beginners」

「..... Haha」

And, as Timberu lightly jeered, he waved the staff in his right hand.

The jewel adorned to the tip of the staff dimly shined, and the surrounding Plateau Lizardmen silently began to move.

The Lizardmen's movements felt like they were devoid of all life.

An abnormal silence filled the air as the battle with the Summoner commenced.

◇ – ♦ – ◇

Up until now, Ran had fought against 【Necromancers】 several times using Aran's Avatar.

During those times what the Summoners called were not Mobs, they were Players.

Based on the orders of the Summoner, the servants were able to make full use of both Skills and Magic. With waves of coordinated attacks, these 「Dolls」 created from Player data were infinitely harder to deal with than ones made from Mobs.

However, Ran was able to deal with all of those servants.

The reason why: even though those 【Servants of the Dead】 seem invincible at first glance, they always have a certain weakness.

「Kill Them!!」

Taking the initiative, 3 of the Lizardmen attacked Edgar who was standing up front.

Rising up, they aimed for the throat from both sides.

Swiping horizontally as they aimed for the abdomen; Lowering their stance as they aimed for the legs—

Taking orders from Timberu as he took to the rear, the Lizardman charged forward and let loose powerful claw attacks from every direction— However, each one of their attacks simply cut through empty air.

That was the first weakness of servants summoned through 【Undead Magic】.

The initial speed of the summoned servants attacks are much slower than their original selves.

For Edgar who has fought against countless Mobs and Players alike, those attacks were effortlessly seen through.

「You're a nuisance!」

Distorting his body, Edgar who had nimbly dodged the attacks by crouching down had started to activate a new Skill he just learned.

Returning the blade to the saya, tightly gripping the hilt, he drew the sword at blistering speeds, and unleashed it—

Left behind in the remnants of that swiftness, an effect indicating that damage had struck true. In the aftermath, the blade brilliantly danced as it returned to its saya.

For a Samurai it was the fastest skill they could perform, The 【Iai】 Skill: 【Razor Blaze】^[3].

A pedal-like effect revolved around Edgar.

The high speed 【Razor Blaze】 pierced through the 3 Plataeu Lizardmen. Within a short amount of time, all of their health had dissipated and vanished.

「ツ!!」

The Lizardmen's bodies shook and swayed, and they faded away as they fell down on the spot.

Gazing upon Edgar who had instant-killed the Lizardmen, without a hint of surprise in his warped smile, was their puppeteer: Timberu.

「.....Hmph, as expected」

「For servants summoned through 【Undead Magic】 , they only possess about half the defensive power at most. It is easy enough to deal with 【Servant of the Dead】 Lizardmen by using swift attacks, despite their characteristic thick scales」

Unlike the 「Living」 Plataeu Lizardmen who can repel superficial attacks with their scales, if it is a 「Dead」 Plataeu Lizardman who was summoned, then even Usa's attack should be able to work against them.

That was the 2nd weakness; it was the main factor as to why Edgar let Usa take care of the other Lizardmen.

「'YES', that's right. However..... violence in numbers is a terrifying thing, ya know?」

「.....ツ！」

Timberu's staff once again emitted ominous light.

A short incantation.

You plan to summon more Lizardman huh.

「Usa! I'll leave the rear to you!」

Edgar kicked off the ground.

Matching that movement, Timberu drew his distance as he continued to summon Lizardmen.

The distance between us is about 10 meters.

If I can bridge this gap, then I will win.

If I don't manage to corner him— Then Timberu will win with overwhelming numbers.

「HOW AMUSING!」

Edgar promptly unleashed the Moon Step.

Covered by a pale ring of light, he slipped past a number of Lizardmen. Splashes of blood mixed into the air.

One after another, the Lizardmen once again became corpses.

However, Timberu did not stop his incantation as the Lizardmen continued to impede the way as meat shields.

「HA HA HA HA! COME ON NOW! IF YOU DON'T HURRY UP THEN YOUR STAMINA WON'T LAST!」

Moon Step was not a Skill, it was a Technique created from Skills.

Edgar was dazzling with pale light, as the distance between Timberu grew smaller and smaller, his Stamina was slowly depleting.

Will this distance to Timberu reach 0 first, or will Edgar's Stamina become 0—

「.....ツ!!」

Looking beyond the Lizardmen, he could see an indigo robe.

However, Edgar's blade could not reach that robe.

Edgar was able to bridge the 10 meter distance, but his Stamina had already become empty.

What decided this fate, was Edgar's total Stamina.

For the low level Edgar, his Stamina capacity was the one to lose out.

「HAHA! QUITE THE PUSHOVER, AREN'T YOU! 『MOON STEP USER』 !」

As if saying "This is the end", Timberu began his aria a second time.

Edgar was surrounded by a dark blue light, and from it came a number of Lizardmen, a number large enough to kill Edgar.

I win.

A look of mad ecstasy showed on Timberu's warped face.

But—

「..... The match is not yet decided」

Whispering those soft words, was a member of Edgar's Party, it was Sonya.

Deafened by the cries of the defeated Lizardmen, Sonya's word did not reach Timberu's ears. But, he immediately understood what was happening

Faintly, a golden glow enveloped Edgar's figure.

That was, the effect of the 「Energy Potion」 that restores a fixed amount of Stamina.

「.....ツ！！」

Having his Stamina restored, Edgar's body once again shined with a pale-blue light.

Timberu jumped back a second time to try and widen the distance, but this time it was too late.

Where Edgar now stood, was behind Timberu.

Standing with their backs to each other, Edgar began to move.

In an instant. A flash—

「..... Now then, Let's hear what you have to say. How come you know about me?」

「Y-You bastard..... ツ」

As the Lizardmen surround Edgar simultaneously turned into particles of light, Edgar let loose a heavy blow to Timberu's back.

The 【Middle Stance】 Skill that caused paralysis: 【Blunt Strike】 —

Receiving the 【Blunt Strike】^[4] from behind, Timberu's body was robbed of its freedom; he fell down to his knees and collapsed.

Footnotes:

1. TL note: A Wide-Range attack is also referred to as a ranged/cone/AOE attack. Since it's a bit hard to imagine a sword slash as a "ranged" attack, I just went with the more literal translation.

2. TL note: Hit-and-Away is a boxing technique otherwise known as "Out Boxing". It involves quick footwork and swift attacks used to confuse and outmaneuver your opponent.

3. TL note: The original name for the skill "Razor Blaze" is "Usuba Kagero", which is more accurately translated as "Thin-blade Heat-haze". I went with "Razor Blaze" because it helps demonstrate the "thinness" and "heat" of the original name.

As a side note, a Usuba knife is a thin knife used by chefs to slice vegetables (Wiki Link).

4. TL note: "Blunt Strike" or otherwise known as "Mi ne Buchi" is a strike using the back/blunt side of a one-sided sword.

CHAPTER 17

THE SAMURAI HUNTER, IS HUNTED

「Sonya, you really saved me there. Thanks」

With the surrounding Lizardmen now gone, and having confirmed that the only one left was the Summoner who had lost control of his body, Edgar offered a few words of thanks to his Partner who helping him out of a pinch.

It was my mistake for using Moon Step the same way I do with Aran.

In that moment, if Sonya had not used an Energy Potion on me... I might have been the one to lose instead.

Looks like I need to reassess Edgar's combat abilities.

「No, I did nothing worthy of thanks. The one who saved Edgar-sama was the person who protected me by dealing with the Lizardmen, it is Usa-san」

「.....Huh, Me?」

For Usa who did not expect her name to be mentioned, she stopped her movements as she was picking up the dropped items left by the Lizardmen. Both her ears stood up on ends.

Just as Edgar had requested, Usa cut down every single one of the Lizardmen who came near to Sonya.

As Usa defeated the Lizardmen who approached Sonya, new Lizardmen would instead be summoned closer to Edgar. Although I sort of get the feeling that she's somewhat at fault for putting me in a pinch, the person who put her all into protecting Sonya was without a doubt this small rabbit-eared Samurai.

「You're right. Thanks for saving me, Usa.」

「eh, umm, no, that is..... I..... this is a bit embarrassing」

Fidgeting and turning, Usa's cheeks turned slightly red.

Embarrassing? Why is it embarrassing?

「.....I-In any case, there's something more important than that, Edgaar-saan!」

「W-What is it?」

「How come Edgar-san can use the Moon Step!?」

「Uuuh」

For a moment it was shoved into the corner of her mind as she focused solely on protecting Sonya, but that question had filled Usa's thoughts up to the brim.

“How come Edgar-san can use the same Moon Step as Aran, the person I admire”.

「He is my benefactor who saved me when I was trapped in Myune」 + 「A Master at using Moon Step」, having both of those titled bestowed upon him, Usa looked towards Edgar with longing envy.

「Perhaps Edgar-san is an acquaintance of Aran-san and you had him teach you how to use the Moon Step, and then the two of you——」

「S, Stop-」

Sure enough, being engulfed by her excitement, Usa grabbed hold of Edgar's hand as she questioned.

「Before any of that, I have to hear a couple of things from that spread out guy over there. Your questions will be for later」

「.....Y-You are right」

All the while stuck in a state of paralysis, Edgar pointed towards the demon-race Summoner who was spread out on the ground.

What exactly is Samurai Hunting.

What are your motives.

And, Why do you know about me.

.....Well, I am questioning him first, because I haven't thought of an excuse for Usa yet. That's another reason I suppose.

「.....Damn, like I thought, you're hella strong」

With the freedom over his body stolen, Timberu merely glanced at Edgar with an unpleasant smile.

「I'm going to ask a few questions」

「Haha, like hell I'll answer you, dumbass. Hurry up and kill me. I ain't got anything good in my inventory so it doesn't mean shit to me」

Timberu cackled and sneered.

Unlike in the real world, here in Dragon's Krone where death is a trivial penalty, threatening someone with murder doesn't have much of an effect.

Just as Timberu said, as long as you don't put anything into your item inventory, and if your equipment is nothing but cheap store-bought goods, then you can face death without ever fearing penalty.

「I see. So even someone like you can use their brains huh.」

「No shit. Besides, the “spoils” from today’s hunt were *really* good. Ain’t that right 『Edgar-san』 ? *Ku ku*, I’m glad I stuck around this place for so long」

Timberu wore a grin as if he was the true victor.

So his spoils of war would be my name huh.

—Hmph. To think he would open up his mouth like that.

「Thanks. A few questions are resolved now. I didn’t think that you would give me answers even before I started questioning you though」

「.....Eh?」

Timberu’s expression stiffed up for a second.

「I’ve understood 2 things from your words just now. First off, I knew that there were a few others besides you who are hunting samurai, but it looks like you hunters aren’t affiliated with one another. If you were all cooperating with each other, then you wouldn’t have spent your time stuck here for so long, and you would instead head to the place where my good friends were attacked」

「T-The reason for that is.....」

「And the 2nd thing. The person you are searching for is Me. Even though I don’t know how you know my face, you didn’t know my name. It’s just a guess, but the reason why you know me, is because of a Screen Shot..... No, it’s probably a video」

A Screen Shot is, as the name implies, a term to describe a snapshot in this world.

Unlike recording a video, it did not require the need for in-game currency. Anyone could just take a picture at their leisure.

A Screen Shot, or a Livestream Video. Those were both common methods that could display a Player's face but 「Without displaying their name」 .

「D-D-D-Didn't I, didn't I say I won't say anything」

Edgar's words were right on the mark, is what Timberu's expression was telling him.

「I haven't even started questioning, you right? But, before that... Sonya. Can you purchase a livestream time-slot for me? For the cost, please use the money left at the Home House. Make it free for others to view the stream. I want as much people to see it as possible」

「As you wish」

「.....W-What, a, a livestream slot? What do you plan on doing!?」

Ignoring the panicking Timberu, Edgar opened up the livestream menu.

An all so familiar window popped up.

Being displayed within that window, was a reflection of Edgar's view.

In other words, it was showing Timberu.

「Usa, with you included, there are quite a number of Players falling victim to the Samurai Hunting incident, am I right?」

「Eh.....? Umm..... Yes. It seems like a large number of Samurai Players are being attacked by PKers」

「As I had explained the other day, within the past few days the mortality rate of Samurai class Players has increased exponentially due to acts of PK. Based on that

information, I believe it would not be incorrect to say that there has been a large number of victims」

Sonya softly added on that extra information.

「W-What of it, What do you mean!? What does that have to do with anything!？」

「..... You, as expected, you're not that smart huh. What we're trying to say is, there are a ton of Samurai Players who are incredibly pissed-off at you 『Samurai Hunters』」

「.....ツ！！」

Finally getting a grasp on the current situation, Timberu's face instantly turned pale.

There was a reason why livestream videos and screen shots didn't display other peoples names.

If perhaps the Player Name of an unrelated 3rd party was displayed, then it was possible to look up their Player Name and learn everything about their in-game information.

For example, depending on the current time and place, you could gain some extremely useful information.

And, if you were seeking revenge on someone for PKing you, then—

「..... Edgar-sama, I have finished purchasing your requested livestream time-slot」

「Thanks」

Sonya's voice rang out as if it were a death sentence.

And so, the status of the livestream window reflecting Edgar's vision changed from 「Offline」 to 「Online」。

◊ – ♦ – ◊

「Hello to all you Listeners out there. My name is Edgar. Let's see~, I believe this is the first time many of you have met me, but many of you are probably wondering why I have suddenly started streaming..... By a miraculous chance, today I have found a Player that I'm sure *many* of you have been searching for. Here is that player, his name is Tim——」

「WAAIT! WAIT,WAIT,WAIT! STOP IT! STOP THE LIVESTREEAAM!」

While Edgar started off the livestream in a manner that seemed like he was used to it, Timberu shouted and cried as he tried to interrupt the broadcast.

What Edgar was currently broadcasting, was the 「Name」 and 「Appearance」 of Timberu: a member of the Samurai Hunters.

It was possible to change your name by paying money, but it would take time for the transaction to complete. Even if this guy is a PK Player, I still think that revealing someone's name is somewhat unethical. But even so, I still want to support those Samurai Players who have to play while being afraid of the shadows.

「I GET IT ALREADY, I'LL TALK, I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING! SO STOP THE STREAM ALREADY!」

「..... Just say that from the start then. So annoying」

“What a waste of money”, while grumbling to himself, Edgar switched the livestream status to Offline.

「So?」

「..... What you said before was right, the Samurai we have been searching for is You. I don't know any of the other guys, and I don't feel like getting all buddy-buddy with them either. If anything, they're not much different from enemies to me」

「And your motives?」

「It varies. There are a few guys who want to challenge you to some PvP, and there's also guys who just want to find out your identity. I'm part of the former」

「Why though? Why do you want to fight me in PvP?」

This Avatar's level is low, and its equipment isn't that great either.

I still don't think that I will lose..... but there shouldn't be much merit in winning against me.

「Ain't it obvious. It's cuz the only one who can use Moon Step other than Aran is you」

「.....W-Wha!?」

Edgar unintentionally gasped.

That's impossible.

It's true that a while ago I ended up using Moon Step in front of this guy, but aside from just now there shouldn't be any Players who know that I can use Moon Step.

When I went Mob hunting with Suzu and the others I didn't use it. Even when our group was about to get wiped out a few days ago, I still didn't use Moon Step.

Of course, even if they knew, Megu-san Andou and Yamabuki... they wouldn't—

「.....No, hold on a second」

Edgar slowly churned through his memories.

Within those memories, from the moment this Avatar was created, he traced back to that one Grand Mission.

The reckless Andou and Yamabuki.

The Colluding Players that attacked them.

Being carried away by his anger, the thing he used was— The Moon Step.

「Damn it. Maybe... it was during that Grand Mission huh」

I screwed up. I should've been more careful.

At that time, I don't know if it was the Fighter or the Monk— But one of them was recording it huh.

「Sonya. I need you to collect some info. Focus on searching videos」

「Understood. And for the Keyword?」

「Let's see... Go with 『Moon Step』 and 『Mist Witch』」

Sonya closed her eyelids. She was accessing the massive database.

And from that database, she pulled out any information that was related to the keywords Moon Step and Mist Witch.

「..... There are 160 corresponding results. As for videos that correspond to both Keywords, there is only 1」

「What is the name of the video?」

「The title is 『The Mysterious Moon Step User at Mist Witch』. The video was submitted 1 week ago」

With that information, Edgar searched through the video rankings for the video in question.

And he started playing the video.

Being shown in the video was the figure of a completely unremarkable and average-looking Player. It was a figure he often saw in the real world; it was a picture of himself.

So it's true, huh.

There was still a video left over from that Grand Mission that showed me using the Moon Step.

And once the other Players saw this video, they came searching for me huh. Rather than pursuing Aran who has a much higher level and better equipment, if they chased after the low level Edgar with poor equipment, then they might be able to come close to realizing the secret behind Moon Step.

The only saving grace, is that there's only a small number of people who have seen this video.

「Sonya, put out a request to the Admins to remove that video. State that the reason is because the video was recorded by Colluding Players from the Grand Mission a few days ago」

「As you request」

Things have become really troublesome.

Even if the video does get taken down, there will still be some time before everything is resolved. And in the meantime the flames spread by the Samurai Hunters probably won't die down easily.

Most likely, there are more than just intermediate level players chasing after Edgar.

Even among the high ranked livestreamers, there are probably a few who want to add “I can use the Moon Step” to their descriptions. Those people might come desperately searching for Edgar.

「hey-, Edgar」

Towards Edgar who was making a bitter expression as he wrinkled his brow, Timberu called out in a hushed tone.

「How come you can use the Moon Step? Rather, how do you use it?」

「..... I have no reason to tell you」

More like, there's no way I would tell you.

Just how messed up is this guy's thought process.

「Aside from that, Timberu. I'll give you a warning. Don't ever go disclosing my name」

「O-Of course I know that」

「Listen here. If the Samurai Hunters somehow find out my name, it doesn't matter if you are innocent or guilty—— I'll come searching for you even to the far ends of the planet」

「.....C-C'mon man. That's just cruel」

「Which one of us is the “cruel” one here」

Like you're one to talk, waiting here just to PK beginner players.

As I thought, maybe I should just continue the broadcast.

「I've told you everything I know. Isn't that enough?」

Timberu made an appeal as if saying, "Please spare me."

In those all so terrifying demon eyes, the remnants of tears started to surface.

「Let's see..... Usa, is there something you'd like to say to the man who attacked you?」

「..... Eh? Me?」

「If you like, you could finish him off you know?」

「EEH!? Um, no, uhh.....」

Being suddenly thrown a question by Edgar, Usa was completely caught off guard.

It's true that this person attacked me, and because of him we were trapped in Myune but... because of that I was able to meet Edgar-san.

I'm not really holding a grudge against him.

But still, in times like this you have to firmly teach them a lesson.

For the sake of other Samurai as well.

She mumbled and nodded to herself for some time, and, sharply returning to her senses, Usa cried out.

「If you do it again, T-T-T-Then I'll beat you up you heear! D-Don't look down on us Samuraai!」

While trying her best to fill her voice with a sense of intimidation, Usa's voice rang out into the surroundings.

The person herself tried to make a scary demonic face ^[1], wanting to instill in Timberu a sense of fear, but no matter how you looked at it, it only looked like a tiny girl overexerting herself as she acted all *tsun-tsun*.^[2]

Frankly put, it was cute.

「..... Yeah, well... What she said. Don't underestimate Samurai」

Edgar added on those few words.

But unlike Usa, Edgar glanced towards Timberu with a menacing gaze. Welling up from within Timberu's throat, was a small, scream.

Footnotes:

1. TL note: The “Demonic Face” that Usa made was her trying to imitate a Hannya mask. Wiki link for explanation and an example picture is [here](#).

2. TL note: In case you didn't know, Tsun-Tsun is the first half of tsundere, with Tsundere meaning something like “acting coldly at first then later lovey dovey”.

If I had to choose different words to describe Usa's actions, it would be like “cute pouting”.

CHAPTER 18

FRIEND

Before Edgar was, a clock that displayed both the in-game time and the real world time.

Having left Timberu in the Veroon Grand Duchy Area, Edgar had Fast Traveled from the mountain district to Crescendo and was unintentionally doing a double take as he looked towards the clock a second time.

It seemed as if he had noticed something terrible... In the real world— it was 2 am in the morning.

Tomorrow, or rather, Today is Wednesday.

Naturally it was not a holiday.

It looks like this will be another sleep deprived night.

「Edgar-san, I really am grateful to you」

While not taking notice of Edgar as he was momentarily feeling blue, Usa sincerely bowed her head.

Thinking of it, I don't know what she does in the real world, but I wonder if it's okay for Usa to be playing this late at night.

Although it doesn't concern me either way.

「No, it was thanks to you that I was able to understand more about the Samurai Hunting. You really helped me out」

「Even though they attacked your friend-sans, the Samurai Hunters will still be chasing after you, isn't that right Edgar-san?」

「Yeah, probably」

However, even while saying that, there was still one thing that was on Edgar's mind.

I have a feeling that the Wizard somehow knew Suzu-san's name. And that she knew that Suzu-san and I are acquaintances.

Of course the video uploaded by those colluding players showed Suzu-san in it, but her name was obviously not displayed.

How come that Wizard knew Suzu-san's name

—I have a feeling that I might have overlooked something.

「But, the person who attacked my friends was not that Summoner, it was a different Player. I plan on doing a bit more searching in order to find the true culprit」

「Eh!? In that case, allow me to help you again! Let's search for that Wizard!」

「ゞ!? Are you seriously saying that?」

「Of course! I'm super serious!」

Usa replies as she happily bounced about.

However, Edgar wore a troubled expression as he scratched his head.

It's true that being in a Party making it easier to fight, but I'll pass on that. If I'm alone then I don't have to be concerned about revealing any secrets. It's better not having to worry.

Also if I'm alone then I could also use Aran.

No matter how you think of it, it's better to investigate alone. If I need someone with me then just Sonya should be enough.

「Hmmm..... you're looking for a Female Wizard who is demon-race, right then. I will do my best to search for her! If anything comes up then I will contact you!」

「Hey, wait a second. You plan on searching on your own? She is a Samurai Hunter who's killing samurai you know?」

Usa looks completely different from me, so I doubt that she would be attacked... But the possibility isn't zero.

The truth is, Usa has already been attacked by that Summoner.

「T-That may be true. But I'll be fine! I, I'm confident in my ability to run away after all!」

「Well, even while being attacked by Mobs, Master was able to run all the way to the Veroon Grand Duchy Area. She is a talented person」

「..... See? Even Momo says so」

Sitting atop her shoulder while giving a big yawn, Usa rustled Momo's hair saying, 「You're such a good child~」 as she pet Momo on the head.

But, I'm pretty sure Momo was making fun of you there.

「Edgar-sama, since it will be dangerous to have your Friends assist in searching for that Wizard, because they were shown in the Grand Mission footage, would it not be all right to cooperate alongside Usa-san?」

「If I need someone to come with me then you are enough, Sonya」

「In order to search for something, it is better to have multiple people rather than just one. Even the database says so, you know?」

「.....No, but」

Edgar folded his arms in response to Sonya's awfully persistent pressure. He thought it over with a sour expression.

It's true that Sonya does have a point.

Until that video is taken down, it might be a good idea to keep my distance from Suzusan and the others. If that's the case, then it might be better to have Usa cooperate with me instead.

Well, in the end I'll only be chasing after that Wizard until the video gets taken down.

But until then, it might be okay to have some help, I guess...

「All right then. I'll be counting on you, Usa」

「ゞ!! YAY!! Please treat me well! Shishou!!」

Usa looked like she was entirely and thoroughly delighted.

However, Edgar did not fail to miss that one word that Usa has shouted out.

「.....Hold up, what do you mean by “Shishou^[1]”」

「I've realized something today. That Aran-san isn't who I should be aspiring to be like. Saving me when I was in trouble, super cool and really strong..... I want to be like Edgar-san. *Ehehe*」

「What are you saying, Master」

「*I said it~*」 starting to blush, Usa tried to hide her embarrassment by placing both hands on her red cheeks. Momo sent her a dampened gaze.

And, Edgar also looked onward with an alarming stare.

「Therefore..... Edgar-san, is it all right if I call you Shishou」

「I refuse」

Bashfully fidgeting, Usa asked that question. But, like the swift slice of a katana, Edgar sharply replied with rejection.

Momo also said the same thing, but really, what the hell are you saying.

「EEHH!? WWHY NOT!? I- I'll do my best you know! One day I'll become a samurai like Edgar-san, and that way I can lend Edgar-san my strength too!」

「Don't need it」

In the last battle I relied on you a bit to help take care of the Lizardmen, but there's no way I'll fall so low to the point where I have to rely on your strength. You calling me your Shishou, I don't see any reason for that either.

「Uuu..... e-even if you say that..... umm... Oh, I-I'll send you a Friend Request, okay! That Wizard, if I find anything about her then I'll message you, okay!」

「I don't need that either」

「Hiiin.....」

At Edgar's unrelenting bitter expression, tears started to gather around Usa's eyes.

But, never losing heart, Usa opened up the menu, and sent Edgar a Friend Request.

「I-I sent you a request! All right then, I am finished now so I will be logging out okay! Thank you very much! Shish-..... Edgar-san! Sonya-san!」

「H-Hey, don't do that on your own! Wait, Hold on!」

「See ya later, Edgar, Sonya」 (Momo)

Firing off a wave of 「Verbal Attacks」 , Usa and Momo disappeared, as if running away.

The only thing left, was a popup window in the corner of Edgar's view, notifying him of Usa's Friend Request.

「..... She was a bit rambunctious, but she was somewhat cute wasn't she, Edgar-sama」

「In what way. If I knew it would be this troublesome then I wouldn't have helped her back in Myune」

What the hell do you mean, "I want to be like you".

Are you trying to get in the way of my precious alone time?

「I, for one, know it」

「Know what?」

「That Edgar-sama is a kind person」

「..... ツ!!」

Sonya wore a warm gentle smile.

Edgar's heart skipped a beat in surprise

「Edgar-sama, I believe it is about time for you to be logging out. You have been on much later than usual today」

「..... You... that's unfair」

Sonya sent him a fleeting glance as Edgar responded with a scowl.

Saying something like that, and then insisting that I log out.

Isn't that the same as quitting while you're ahead.

「Providing relief from the world on the other side, that is the reason why this world exists after all. I believe it is best to have moderation in your playtime」

「You know that I hate going to school」

「Of course. However, recently Edgar-sama seems to be having fun you know?」

「..... Having fun? Me? No way」

Shrugging his shoulder, Edgar let out a depressing laugh.

What kind of proof do you have to say something like that.

「Sonya knows it very well. I have been together with Edgar-sama for a long time after all」

「.....Haa」

Edgar let out a deep sigh as he grew further depressed with the idea that someone else might know him better than himself.

I look like I'm having fun? Playing Dragon's Krone with someone else is much more fun?

—*How Stupid.*

It's true what Sonya said, when I play with Suzu-san my heart dances. But, playing by myself is several times more enjoyable.

I live my life in this place.

That's why I have fun by myself.

Playing with classmates is where I draw the line. Friends in this world, I don't need them.

Especially not a rabbit-eared girl who calls me Shishou, I'll definitely pass on that.

「..... Later, Sonya. See you tomorrow」

「Okay. Sonya will always be looking forward to Edgar-sama's return」

Linking her hands together, Sonya gracefully gave a bow.

While watching Sonya, Edgar opened up the Menu.

Menu: Logout—

Edgar's body, starting from the feet, it started to change into beads of light.

Being displayed in the window, were the words 「In the Process of Logging Out」 .

Before that that process could complete, Edgar looked over at Usa's friend request.

And, while clicking his tongue, he pressed 「Accept」 .

TL Side Note: And so we reach the end of Vol. 2 of the web novel! The Light Novel Version of Volume 1 includes Vol. 1 – Vol. 3 of the web novel, so you'll have to wait before I post some LN Volume 2 pictures.

Footnotes:

1. TL note: Shishou means Master or Teacher. In context it is referred to someone who teaches you their trade/skills.

